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## ABSTRACT

The International Communication Division of the proceedings contains the following 18 papers: "Spy or Scapegoat: A News Framing Study of the 'New York Times'" Coverage of the Wen Ho Lee Case" (Jia Lin & Junhao Hong); "Individual Perceptions of International Correspondents in the Middle East: An Obstacle to Fair News?" (Dina Ibrahim); "British vs. U.S. Newspaper Framing of Arabs in Coverage of the Middle-Eastern Conflict Pre and Post Sept. 11: A Case Study" (Mia Moody-Hall); "The Role of Journalism in 19th Century National Movements in Estonia and Finland: Apples and Apples?" (Janis Cakars); "Covering the Dead: U.S. and Chinese Magazine Reportage of the Crackdown on the Tiananmen Square Movement" (Yu Shi); "Perceptions of Brazilian Journalists about Media Roles and Foreign Influences" (Heloiza G. Herscovitz); "Public Broadcasting Systems Demise Within the Dominant Private System Model: The Netherlands Case" (Tony R. DeMars); "Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide: Government Policies and Internet Access" (Eliza Tanner Hawkins and Kirk A. Hawkins); "A Profile of Ugandan Journalists in the New Millennium" (Peter G. Mwesige); "The Media & Foreign Affairs: A Comparative Content Analysis of 'The New York Times'" Coverage of Zaire" (Peter G. Mwesige); "Framing Environmental Destruction on U.S. Army Camps in South Korea" (Haejin Yun); "International News Flow and the U.S. News Media: A Model Proposed from a Critical Review of the Literature" (Takuya Sakurai); "Post-Communist Broadcast Media: A Case Study of Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law" (Max V. Grubb); "Assessing the Hierarchy of Influences Theory of Content: Coverage of the Cultural Revolution in China by 'Time' and 'Newsweek', 1966-69" (Guoli Li and Anne Cooper-Chen); "Press Freedom in Hong Kong Before and After 1997--Newspapers' Coverage of China" (Tianbo Huang, Juyan Zhang, and Yi Lu); "The Possibility of Adoption of the Actual Malice Rule in Foreign Countries: From the Fourth Estate Perspective" (Taegyu Son); "'Glocalizing' a Dam Conflict: 'Thai Rath,' 'Matichon' and Pak Mun Dam" (Suda Ishida); and "Propaganda vs. The Market Economy: A Study of the Conglomeration of China's Newspaper Industry" (Ernest Y. Zhang and Brian S. Brooks). (RS)

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**Spy or Scapegoat:  
A News Framing Study of the *New York Times'* Coverage of  
the Wen Ho Lee Case**

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## **Abstract**

Through both traditional and computer-based content analysis of the *New York Times'* coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case, this article explores how the U.S. mainstream media frame their coverage of news events, especially foreign news events. Based on the findings, this study suggests that a dominant ideology is often behind the news coverage. In addition, the research also finds that U.S. media's biased coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case is more toward China than to Wen Ho Lee. The Cold War ideology is still prevailing in the post-Cold War era

## **Spy or Scapegoat: A News Framing Study of the *New York Times'* Coverage of the Wen Ho Lee Case**

### **Introduction**

Wen Ho Lee, a former nuclear scientist in Los Alamos National Laboratory was once a sizzling topic in all US major media for almost two years from 1999 to 2000, because of his alleged involvement in Chinese espionage against US nuclear bomb technology. The Wen Ho Lee case was often headline news on national TV networks and in many newspapers during that period. Wen Ho Lee himself was once called one of the greatest threats to national security and was cuffed in confinement for nine months. However, he was finally released with an apology from a federal district judge.

The Wen Ho Lee case had been full of dramatic moments beginning on March 6, 1999, when the *New York Times* broke the news about the leak of top nuclear secrets to China. The media publicized Lee as a Chinese spy who stole restricted information for China. Lee was soon fired from Los Alamos Laboratory. Three months later, the release of the COX Report presented to the U.S. Congress brought the "China threat" to a new stage. On the Christmas Eve of 1999, Lee was arrested with 59 felony charges, though none of them was related to espionage. On September 13, 2000, only a few days after claiming that it would be too risky for national security to release Lee even on \$1million bail, government prosecutors accepted a guilty plea on just one out of 59 charges of improperly transferring restricted information. The government dropped all other 58 charges.

The media's role in this event is quite intriguing. The investigation into the possible leak from the Los Alamos National Laboratory had been underway for nearly three years before the *New York Times* went to the public with a front-page story of more than 4,000 words. Right after the *New York Times* gave Lee's name away, Los Alamos Laboratory fired Lee under political pressures. One and half years later on September 28, 2000, it was the *New York Times* again that expressed a "frank regret" for what they had done to Lee. But the newspaper put blame on the government's theory and its view of Lee's espionage for China to justify its biased news coverage. On December 21, 2000, Lee and his family filed a lawsuit against the FBI for leaking their secrets to news organizations and creating a "trial-by media atmosphere" to convince the public that the Lees were Chinese spies. In the *New York Times'* own words, the Wen Ho Lee case is not only a "government's case," but also a "journalism issues" (*New York Times*, 2000).

Hachten(1987) indicates that "all press systems reflect the values of the political and economic systems of the nations within which they operate"(p.16). Other than a window through which to observe

American politics including foreign policy, juridical system and racial problems, the Wen Ho Lee case also can be used to examine various important aspects of the media, such as the media's relationship with government, the media's influence on public opinion, and the media's bias in news coverage.

In the Wen Ho Lee case, the *New York Times* has admitted its consistent reflection of the government's voice and its biased attitude to Lee due to his Chinese ancestry. Although the newspaper carefully avoided apologies or acknowledgement of inaccuracies, it stated that it could have done more to offer a balanced review of the case. The criticisms of the *New York Times* for its coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case focus on its unfair and biased "investigative journalism" (Morse, 2000; Hoyt, 2000; Strupp, 2000). Although racial issue has been addressed both by critics and by the public there is no dispute about the Chinese hysteria among the critics and the media who still hold the view that China keeps stealing advanced technology through spies in the US.

Previous studies have revealed the media's reliance on government. In particular coverage on international events is often consistent with US foreign policy (Bennet, 1990; Paletz & Entman, 1981; Sundar & Rawlins, 1997). Also media's coverage of minorities tends to be stereotyping and its coverage of foreign countries tends to be biased and negative (Song & Dombrink, 1996; Rachlin, 1988; Chang, etc. 1987). Lee's case brings the media's entwinement with the government's policy and the media's racial bias to our attention: Does the U.S. major media's framing of the Wen Ho Lee case reflect government's foreign policy in the grand environment of globalization? This study tries to probe whether and how media framed their coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case and the ideologies behind the framing.

### **The Theoretical Backgrounds & Hypotheses**

As the most powerful channels to report and deliver news events, one of the media's most important functions is to select what to ignore, what to suppress and what to emphasize (Gitlin, 1980; Durham, 1998; Gamson, 1989). For a breaking event, the interaction between the initial sources and media set the framing process in the movement (Entman, 1991). Therefore, based on the right-wing's anti-China demagogic and the FBI's assumption that Lee was a Chinese Spy, reporters and writers quickly developed a new "event-specific schema" (Entman, 1991, p.7.)

News frames are typically wide-accepted principles of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and presentation and are routinely used by journalists to organize discourse (Goffman, 1974; Gitlin, 1980). In reality, absolute journalistic objectivity is impossible because first, journalists can hardly know the whole truth about any event, person, or circumstance. Second but no important, due to the limit of space, time, pertinence and other factors, not everything journalists do know can be reported (Bovee, 1999). Acting as

gatekeepers, editors and reporters select what stories appearing in mass media, and what aspects of a story are highlighted or in other words, how the story is portrayed. Therefore, by the driver of media one-dimensional facts instead of multi-dimensional information about from reality There are certain metaphors or themes in a journalist's mind to organize news, and they apply the pre-existing structure into reality. According to Cohen and Young, the stereotype by media is "a way of simplifying reality" (1981, p.18), thus the media translate reality into stereotype.

When developing a story, reporters and writers may seek more information to challenge certain dominant aspects of an event. But in general, when constructing a story, the "event-specific schema" is leading journalists to make frame-confirming data, instead of paying the same amount of attention to other sides of the event. In the Wen Ho Lee case, according to Brian Sun, Lee's lawyer, "The Lees see themselves as victims of numerous unlawful leaks, many of which have been inaccurate. They believe they are victims of this culture of arrogance, and that people should be held accountable." (Los Angeles Times, 1999)

Rachlin (1988) states that journalism is a kind of cultural activity, and "the journalist has been exposed to the same constellation of understandings and values as most of us" (p.12). Gitlin (1980) points out that the force behind the prevailing news frames is constituted by the journalistic profession, organizational discipline, a society's economy, politics and ideology. He especially stresses the impact of hegemonic ideology on cultural apparatuses including the media and journalists. He argues that in a liberal capital society where there is no single functioning ruling class and none does hegemonic work only, power and culture are segmented and specialized; thus ideology forms as a cohesive force in all realms of life experience, ethnically and geographically as well as politically. This ideology functions in news-making too. The dominant frames are taken for granted by media practitioners and were not conceived to be hegemonic.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) elaborate that the Western media's biased and negative coverage of other countries results from constraints of Western media imposed by the Western social system. This social system's constraints theory implies that the political and ideological motive and the media's critical and economic nature are the products of the constraints, not the cause; the cause is the Western social system (Hong, 1998).

Was there "news framing" in the U.S. media's coverage of the Won Ho Lee case? If yes, how did the U.S. media frame the reporting of Wen Ho Lee case? Should the media be responsible for the wrong treatment to Lee? This research attempts to explore these questions by proposing the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis #1: "spy stories" receive more attention from the media than any stories of other themes, as reflected in the number of articles, length of articles and placement and page location of articles.

Hypothesis #2: China, instead of Wen Ho Lee, will be the center of the "spy stories".

The examination of this longitudinal event will begin with a review of the amount of stories of various themes, as well as the length and placement of these stories. Entman (1993) suggests that the essence of framing is sizing, the magnifying or shrinking of elements of the depicted reality to make them more or less salient. Norris (1995) further points out that priority of coverage can be measured by the number and length of stories and the story order. And the placement on front page reflects the story's primacy and importance.

On the other hand, this research also examines the semantic network structures of the key symbols in the news texts. The frame of texts is a central organizing strategy of the news, and news frames can relate to the characteristics of the news text itself. According to Pan and Kosicki (1993), with the placement, repetition or association of certain culturally recognized symbols, news texts can make certain information or subject's salient to the audience. In the print media, certain words are used repeatedly and together, thereby rendered more salient in texts; they evoke ideas typically associated with a particular kind of public discourse. According to Bennett (1980), news coverage of political events include referential symbols which are economical, concrete and not prone to attract emotional baggage, as well as condensational symbols which appear in abstract contexts and have powerful emotional concerns for the audience. Kim (1999) argues that a certain cluster of words or symbols within news texts evokes a particular meaning and meaning can be interpreted from an emergent communication network of words.

### **Methodology**

Entman (1991) concludes that news frames can be identified by the key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized in the news narratives. In this news framing study, both traditional content analysis and a computer-based content analysis program will be adopted to achieve a complete picture of the New York Times' coverage on the Wen Ho Lee case.

Traditional content analysis requires pre-conceived categories to make a judgment about the text or themes, and the judgment is more or less subjective. To reduce these biases and enhance reliability, this research also adopts CATPAC, a computer-based analysis method, to identify the overall symbolic patterns of news coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case.

## 1. Sampling

News articles about the Wen Ho Lee case in the *New York Times* are retrieved by searching terms **Los Alamos** or **Wen Ho Lee** in Lexis-Nexis. Aside from its unique association with the Wen Ho Lee case. The reputation of the *New York Times* as a standard of journalistic excellence and as a newspaper with a great influence in providing definition for events of the world has often made it selection for studies of mass media. Stories related to the Wen Ho Lee case include all reports on investigation and the legal process of the case, the comment and opinion from the governmental administrators, politicians and the public on this case, and its effect on lab security, national security and Sino-American relations. The search period began with March 6, when the *New York Times* first brought the news to the public and ended on December 31, 2000, about three months after Lee was released. Scant coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case after the year 2000 was not included.

Most of the news stories were in section A from Monday to Saturday and in Sunday's section L, where is the major national and news is located. If stories were in other sections, such as the science section, section 14 or section 4, they were not counted as front-page stories even their page number was one, because these sections are not as influential as sections A and L.

## 2. Defining themes

Pan and Kosicki (1993) believe that there is one theme functioning as the central organizing idea for each news story. That very theme can associate different semantic elements and convey the meaning. A story theme can be identified through analysis of syntactical structures (patterns of arrangement of words or phrases), script structures (description of events in a storytelling way), thematic structures (the topic or issue of the story focus) and rhetorical structures (stylistic choices such as metaphors, exemplars and visual images).

By analyzing the syntactical, script and thematic structures, this study conducts an initial assessment of all news stories covering Wen Ho Lee case and identifies nine themes ranging from sympathetic to neutral to negative:

1. **Criticism of espionage hysteria:** Domestic criticism of US hysteria about "Chinese espionage."
2. **Voice from China:** Reflecting opinions and comments from China.
3. **criticism of mishandling of Lee's case:** Domestic criticism of racial profiling, FBI's faulty testimony and protest from ethnic groups.

4. **Lee is not guilty:** the defense of Lee by Lee's ally (lawyer, family, friends and peers).
5. **Investigation and new security measures (neutral themes):** Legal investigation, the judicial process, personnel changes in the administration and new measures in the lab to enhance security.
6. **Lee mishandled nuclear data:** Lee's mishandling of sensitive data and the vulnerability of lab security.
7. **National security in danger:** The threat to the national security by foreign enemies, criticism of the White House for the lapse in national security, and the FBI's justification for their wrongdoing to Lee under the purpose of protecting national security.
8. **Lee is a spy:** Lee's guilt as a spy for China, and Lee's downloading of classified secret data in order to pass them to China;
9. **China's espionage against US:** China's spying on the US's high technology and the discussion on how to prevent China's espionage.

Coding all the related stories into these nine theme categories is based on the analysis of all the stories' headlines and lead paragraphs, which in most cases state the most important information of the text and the main idea. Pan and Kosicki (1993) distinguish headlines and leads as the two most important devices in identifying story themes. As Van Dijk (1991) indicates, headlines are "the most prominent feature of news discourse" (p.227) and serve a fundamental framing function and influence how a story will be understood and stored for later use in making sense of similar issues and events as they unfold. The inverted pyramid news story structures employed by most contemporary journalists enable readers easily to grasp the main idea of a story from a lead paragraph. A good lead shows a newsworthy angle of a story and suggests a specific perspective to view the event (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). For a few news stories and editorials that were not structured in the inverted pyramid style, the whole articles were read before the theme was identified. Also, the spy stories are split into two groups with different emphases: Group 8 focuses on Lee's alleged espionage crime, while group 9 targets China as an enemy and depicts their espionage actions in the U.S. All stories were coded by two coders and there was 97% (204 out of 209) agreement on all articles coded.

### 3. Semantic network: CATPAC-computer-based analysis

CATPAC is an artificial neural network program optimized for reading texts (Woelfel & Fink, 1980; Worlfel, 1998). It is able to identify the most frequently occurring words and determine the patterns of similarity based on the way they are used in the text. Thus, it enables large bodies of texts to be organized into meaningful conceptual groupings. CATPAC has been applied in many forms of texts, such as news stories (Kim, 1999; Park, 2001, Jang, 2000), academic research subjects (Doerfel & Barnett, 1999) and corporate statements (Zaphire, 2000; Hsu & Park, 2001)

The first step in the CATPAC operation is to read the body of text and to exclude the "stop words," such as a list of articles, prepositions, conjunctions and transitive verbs that do not contribute to the meaning of the text (e.g. 'if', 'and', 'that', 'the', 'to', 'is'). In addition, any words that distort the description of the text or that have been shown to be problematic may be removed by using an 'exclude' file. CATPAC then counts the occurrences of the remaining words yielding the most frequently occurring ones. Then CATPAC creates a words-by-words matrix with each cell containing the likelihood that the occurrence of one word will indicate the occurrence of another (The frequency of co-occurrence of any two words) in a text body or window slide. This matrix is then cluster-analyzed.

There are a few limitations for CATPAC analysis. According to Doerfel and Barnett (1996), CATPAC cannot tell the difference between negative and positive connotations of a word or concept, and concepts that use two words to convey meaning may need to be adjusted to avoid being read as two separate words. However, the limitations can be overcome through careful judgment when analyzing and interpreting the results. To enhance the efficiency of CATPAC analysis, some adjustments of data were necessary to make (See Table 8). First, concepts that require more than one word to represent a concept were combined into one word; otherwise, they will be analyzed as different concepts. For example, 'Wen', 'Ho', and 'Lee' are grouped into 'Lee', 'Energy' 'Department' were grouped into 'Energydepartment', etc. Second, derivatives of words were replaced into one word, For instance, 'spying' and 'spies' were changed to 'spy', 'laboratory', 'laboratories' and 'labs' were changed to 'lab'.

The results of CATPAC analysis were shown in a dendrogram file (\_.den file), which presents a list of the frequencies of the most important words and how these words cluster. The dendograms are used to identify clusters of key symbols by showing the patterns of relations between the keywords. The results show where the clusters are divided and how strong the clusters are. The stronger the link between symbols, the closer together they are on the dendrogram. The peaks in the dendrogram indicate the strength of the relationship while valleys indicate the divisions between clustered symbols.

## **Results**

A total of 209 articles including news stories, reports, and editorials related to the Wen Ho Lee case were found in the *New York Times* from March 6, 1999, to December 31, 2000. Half of the total articles were published in the National Desk, while 59 appeared in the Foreign Desk. The Week in Review Desk can be considered the Editorial Desk on Sunday. The editorial desks contain 20.1% of all the articles.

(Table 1 is about here)

### **Story themes**

There were 64 articles with themes 1 to theme 4 that prone to sympathize with Lee and criticize the U.S. government's wrongdoing to Lee and China. These 64 articles comprise 31.1% of all the articles. There were a total of 108 articles with theme 6 to 9 which tend to exaggerate the negative effects of Lee's action, ranging from claiming Lee mishandled classified data (which actually was not classified before Lee was put in jail), to warning that the U. S. was under threats from and exposed to the so-called "Chinese espionage". These 108 articles comprise 51.7% of the total articles. Still, there were 36 articles that covered broad topics of the federal investigation, legal process, personnel reorganization or new measures for lab security. They were mostly fact-based and were written more or less with a neutral tone.

Of the total of 45 "spy stories", 11 focused on Lee's spying crime and 34 stories depicts China's espionage. The "spy stories" comprise 45 of the total articles, which are more than the number of articles of any of the nine themes, thus supporting the first hypothesis of this research.

On the other hand, the research also shows that China's feedback and reaction received the least attention in the *New York Time*'s coverage. Only four very short articles were about the voice from China.

(Table 2 is about here)

Lengths of the articles ranged from 42 words to 5431 words. Most of the detailed articles were about how China spied on the U.S. With the shortest editorial article of 184 words and the longest front-page story of 5431 words, this group of articles topped the articles' length with a mean of 1251 words ( $\alpha=.05$ ).

(Table 3 is about here)

A distribution table of story themes was also built to review the difference of the lengths of articles in each group. For the group of articles about China's espionage, 16 articles exceeded 1000 words (47%) and among them four articles (12%) were more than 2000 words long. The percentages are much higher than stories of other themes. This result also supports the first hypothesis.

(Table 4 is about here)

### **Front-page stories**

The prominent status of "spy themes" was more explicit in front-page stories. Thirteen out of 39 front-page stories focused on how China stole American advanced technologies. Furthermore, the average length of those stories was more than 2,000 words, which was significantly higher than that of all other groups. If we add all stories that claimed Lee and China were guilty and they were a threat to the U.S., in total 23 front-page stories of such themes can be found in groups 6, 7, 8 and 9. These articles comprise 59% of the total front-page stories about the Wen Ho Lee case. One important thing is that although there were more than a dozen front-page stories (No.=13) showing sympathy to Lee and placed criticism on the government's mishandling of his case, there was even not one front-page story in groups 1 and 2, that included articles critical of the U.S. and reflective of China's position.

(Table 5 & 6 are about here)

### **Word frequency**

Figures 1 and 2 present the results from CATPAC analysis. In total, 209 stories were analyzed by CATPAC. Their headlines and lead paragraphs contained 2243 words after excluding non-significant words (table 1). A Ward's method cluster was conducted among the 40 key words with a frequency of higher than 17 (0.8%), and identifies what issues the *New York Times* was most concerned with and what frames it created relating to coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case.

As shown in the descending frequency list (figure 1), the ten most frequently appearing words except the "(Wen Ho) Lee case" were: nuclear, secrets, Los Alamos, China, lab, weapons, government,

officials, security and national. "Nuclear secrets" was the top concern about the Wen Ho Lee case, while "nuclear" is the word that appeared most often (211 times) and comprised 9.4 percent of the total words used in the headlines and lead paragraphs. China is the second concern making exceptions for basic concepts such as "Lee, Los Alamos and scientist". The word "China" appears 109 times and consists of 4.5% of the text being analyzed. After that, "national security" is another big concern with the word "national" appearing 74 times and "security" 80 times. Among other words, there are two significant categories:

First, governmental sources consist of nine out of 40 most frequently used words, including government (3.7%), officials (2.9%), Federal (2.1%), FBI (1.6%), Clinton (1.4%), Energy Department(1.0%), Judge(1.0%), Reno(0.9%), president(0.8%). These words comprised 15.4% of all words in headlines and leads.

The second category of words explicates intelligence under-work which include spy(2.9%), steal(1.6%), espionage(1.3%), suspect(1.6%), and intelligence(1.0%). These words comprise 8.7% of all words used in headlines and leads.

(Figure 1 is about here)

#### **Cluster analysis:**

The cluster procedure clearly locates three main associations, from right to left in figure 1, which contain the following key words separately:

Cluster1: Lee, case, scientist, government, Los Alamos, lab, nuclear, secrets, weapons, security, American, officials

Cluster 2: president, Clinton, United States, Administration, China, Chinese, espionage, spy, steal, suspect, evidence, intelligence

Cluster 3: Energy Department, federal, F.B.I., Judge, Reno, court, investigation, data, computer, accused, mishandling, bail, scientists, court, trial, information.

(Figure 2 is about here)

Cluster 1, which consists of 12 words, presents the basic facts about the Wen Ho Lee case: Lee, an American government scientist, nuclear weapons secrets from Los Alamos laboratory and national security. These are the words that are most frequently grouped together, since they make the highest peak in the dendrogram. The words in these cluster are all neutral or 'referential symbols' which are not meant to attract emotional baggage (Bennet, 1980). There are no specific negative terms like spy, espionage or steal in this category.

In contrast, negative terms and condensational symbols are condensed in Cluster 2, which reflects the political concern about the Wen Ho Lee case: evidence showed that China was spying on United States by stealing nuclear secrets, which had a far-reaching impact on the Chinese-American relationship. This cluster is a little larger than the cluster 1 (13 vs. 12 words), but has a lower peak. Key term 'China's' is grouped next to 'steal' and 'espionage', while 'Chinese' is grouped next to 'spy' and 'intelligence'. 'President Clinton' was at the peak of this cluster, which implies that his China policy is at the center of attention. This cluster strongly supports hypothesis 2 that China instead of Wen Ho Lee is at the center of "spy stories"

Cluster 3 consists of concrete details about the Wen Ho Lee case as a story of criminal investigation. It includes the government's investigation and judicial processing. The cluster can be divided into two sub-categories. The first one focuses on government's and judicial action, and the main players include the FBI, the Energy Department, the Federal District Judge, the Federal Court and Reno, the Attorney General. The other sub-category is concentrated on the content of investigation: the classified data and information in the lab computer are the main concern. The investigation had spread to other scientists working in national nuclear labs. Lee was charged mainly for mishandling classified data and there was debate about if he deserved bail.

### **Discussion**

All the results from the examination of the *New York Times'* news coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case strongly support both the hypotheses. The results of traditional content analysis and computer-based analysis correlate to and complement each other. Among all the articles, those of spy themes received the most attention from the press, more than any other themes such as defending for Lee's innocence, legal investigation or nuclear lab security issues, let alone criticism of the United States' spy hysteria or China's reaction to the condemnation. Spy stories, especially those about China's espionage, comprised the largest portion of all stories, with the greatest average length and the largest amount of front-page placement.

The study also found that most of the spy stories are lengthy and interpretation-based instead of fact-based. Also, the examination of the condensational terms in all the stories showed a strong negative tendency toward Lee and China.

To show a negative attitude toward Lee and China in the *New York Times'* news coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case was relatively easy, but to explain why there was such a strong negative attitude would be much more complicated. It involves a variety of factors and is much more than just a mere journalistic treatment.

As a matter of fact, Lee had already been singled out by FBI as the prime suspect even before the *New York Times* broke the news. But the F.B.I. never clearly explained why Lee was singled out and denied it was either because of Lee's ethnicity or because of Lee's connection with China. On August 20, 1999, the *New York Times* explained that the reason for Lee's being singled out was because "he was a computer scientist in the laboratory's weapons design section who had traveled to China." (*New York Times*, 2000, p.26). But "scores of other Los Alamos employees had also traveled to China" according to the same article. On the other hand, many articles (N=34, p=16.7%) implied it was because Lee mishandled the classified data, but what Lee had done with the data was a very common practice in at least that research lab. Nevertheless, after Lee was arrested without espionage charge, the *New York Times'* coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case began to turn to the authorities' racial profiling and wrongdoing to Lee, and the biases toward Lee began to diminish, which was reflected through the amount of the stories criticizing the government's mishandling of Lee's case (N=29) and those about defending Lee (N=23).

However, this study also found a significant imbalance in the stories about China's espionage against the U.S. While there were 34 stories with negative attitudes about China, there were only eight stories objective attitudes toward China by criticizing Chinese spy mania. In other words, if the tone toward Lee was changed after Lee was clear of espionage charges, the tone toward China was unchanged. That means, even if Lee was not a spy and never spied for China, China's espionage against U.S. still exists and the country is still a threat to the U.S. This unsaid assumption can be more clearly seen in the amount of articles related to national security (N=30, p=14.4%) that showed a strong hostility to China. To a certain degree, the U.S. media's news coverage before Lee was released, which was represented by the *New York Times*, looked more like an ideological and political propaganda campaign against China, rather than a responsible continuing effort to deliver objective and complete information about the Wen Ho Lee case and many related issues to the public.

The key symbols in the CATPAC analysis revealed three distinctive facts about news coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case:

First, there are three story themes that are significantly identified in the word frequency list and dendogram of key symbols. National security and nuclear secrets are the highest concern and they construct a Cold War frame. China is accused of conducting spying activities to steal top military secrets. The second cluster shows that Clinton was being criticized by the House and Senate of being too "soft" on China. The Wen Ho Lee case was said to be an outlet for the House to open fire on Clinton. This explains why "President" and "Clinton" were the peak of this cluster. The third frame concerns the judicial and governmental investigation, which shaped the dynamics of the coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case. What makes the Wen Ho Lee case 'news' was the investigation and dramatic development of this law case. More importantly, nuclear secrets and U.S. China policy are the intrinsic and eternal themes that make this case stand out and receive tremendous attention.

Therefore, the first framing patterns boiled down to the Cold War ideology that decided the way the *New York Times* covered the Wen Ho Lee case, which is the second distinguishing pattern in the news framing. The high frequency of "nuclear secrets," "national security" and "China" construct the main frame of symbolic patterns. Surprisingly, negative descriptions are not closely grouped with Wen Ho Lee, the alleged Chinese spy who was put on trial. The occurrence of China/Chinese with high volumes of negative terms (steal, suspect, espionage, spy and intelligence) places China in a position of super-enemy.

The third pattern of media framing in the Wen Ho Lee case concerns news sources. The list of words with highest frequency reveals that the government's voice dominated the coverage. The *New York Times* framed the coverage of the Wen Ho Lee's case based upon the information and opinions from the Clinton administration, Energy Department, Justice Department, FBI, House of Senate, and officials from various levels of administrations. In contrast, voices from Lee's ally such as family, lawyers, Asian groups are hard to identify in the most frequently occurring symbols. Therefore, this study suggests that the hegemonic frame imposed by the elite press on this case was the result of media's heavy reliance on official sources. On the other hand, the result also reflects the great impact of the government's foreign policy on elite media.

To probe the reason for this significant event-specific schema, it is necessary to look at things more than just the news coverage. As many political observers point out, Wen Ho Lee was a victim of U. S. politics. The McCarthyist atmosphere of the hysteria about the Communist China and Chinese spies has largely to do with right-wing hard-liners and the COX Report. That congressional report strongly insisted that China had been systematically stealing American nuclear secrets to develop its weapons and missiles. The report did not provide many concrete facts but made a number of accusations, still reflecting an old Cold-War ideology, which was defined largely by the virtue of opposition to Communism and which led to a policy framework of containment toward Communist countries (Norris, 1995).

Though the Cold War era was at its finale in the 1990s, the Clinton administration was still under attacks for his “engagement strategy” and being too “soft” on China. Harrie (1999) points out that the debate about China has been divided by the position of “engagement” and the position of “containment”. Engagement was the official attitude of the government, but it was caricatured by its opponents as “appeasement”. The hallmark of the engagement policy is “strategic partnership. On the other hand, advocates of “containment” proceeded on the assumption that if China is finally emerging as a major world power to threaten U.S., there is no option but to treat it as an enemy. The U.S. considered the development of China’s arsenal and missiles its major threats. It was also assumed widely that the improved technology was already stolen from or negligently transferred from the United States (Munro, 2000)

The findings of this study were not a surprise, but once again indicated the media’s framing function and the ideology behind it. According to Gitlin (1980), as a segment of hegemonic system in society (Gitlin, 1980), mass media reacts to the society’s main ideology accordingly, and often echoes the government’s foreign policies. Bennett’s study (1990) on press-state relations in the United States reveals that the government’s voice is usually overwhelming in press coverage of foreign affairs. Moreover, elite press such as the *New York Times* often set the agenda for other news media. The Cold War frame had an agenda-setting effect by determining what events and countries were newsworthy. As Norris (1995) observes, the Cold War frame ran through most elite media’s coverage of international news in the past. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000) in their research on American press coverage of Beijing’s UN Conference on Women found that anti-communism ideology was prominent in framing China. Lee and his colleagues (2000) in their study on US main stream media’s coverage of Hong Kong’s handover also conclude that the new cold war has been one of the most commonly seen ideological packages in the coverage of China issues.

### Conclusion

One of the most important findings of this examination of the various aspects of the *New York Times*’ coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case is that the major bias and stereotyping American elite media imposed on the Wen Ho Lee case was not just resulted from racial profiling or discrimination, but was more from the hegemonic ideology inherited from Cold War era. This Cold War frame has been penetrating the U.S. mainstream media’s coverage of international affairs, especially when related to Communist countries. The news coverage of the Wen Ho Lee case was one of many examples. The spearhead was pointing to China’s alleged espionage, which is consistent with the dominant ideology of U.S. foreign policy on China.

As McCombs and Shaw (1977) point out, media's function of agenda setting specifies a strong relation between emphasis of certain aspect of fact, because "increased salience of a topic or issue in the mass media influences (cause) the salience of that topic or issue among the public." (p.12) Bennett (1990) further stresses media's key role in defining political issues for the society and public. Though the formation of public opinion by media is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear in this study that the emphasis the *New York Times* put on Chinese espionage set an agenda or a frame for readers to think about the Wen Ho Lee case.

The press, including the *New York Times*, finally redressed a miscarriage of justice for Lee, but unfortunately, the China syndrome has still not been cured. Wen Ho Lee has been called a victim of this "spy catching" game. The authority has apologized for the unfair treatment to Lee, and Asian groups have finally gotten a chance to voice protests. But the "spy catching" game plays on and the media, probably more precisely, the elite group is still making efforts in various means to make the public believe that the spy story has not finished yet and they will go on to catch those spies.

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## Appendix

**Table 1** **News Desk**

Desk	Frequency	Percent
National desk	106	50.7
Foreign desk	59	28.2
Editorial desk	28	13.4
Week in review desk	14	6.7
Not section A or L	2	1.0
Total	209	100

**Table 2 Frequency of story themes and percentage**

Themes	Frequency	Percent
1. Criticism on espionage hysteria	8	3.8
2. Voices from China	4	1.9
3. Criticism on mishandling Lee's case	29	14.4
4. Lee is not guilty	23	11.0
5. Investigation and security measures (neutral)	36	17.2
6. Lee mishandled nuclear data	32	15.3
7. National security is in danger	30	14.4
8. Lee is a spy	11	5.3
9. China's espionage on US	34	16.7
Total	209	100

**Table 3 Mean of Lengths for different theme groups**

Themes	Mean of Length
1. Criticism on espionage hysteria	724
2. Voices from China	474
3. Criticism on mishandling Lee's case	936
4. Lee is not guilty	970
5. Investigation and measures	724
6. Lee mishandled nuclear data	720
7. National security is in danger	866
8. Lee is a spy	665
9. China's espionage on US	1251

(mean difference is significant at .05evel)

**Table 4 Distribution of story lengths for each theme group and percentage of certain length range in each group.**

Themes(mean of length)	>2000 words	1000-1999 words	500-999 words	<500 words
1. Criticism on espionage hysteria	0	2(25%)	5(63%)	1(13%)
2. Voices from China	0	0	1(25%)	3(75%)
3. Criticism on mishandling Lee's case	0	9(31%)	14(48%)	5(21%)
4. Lee is not guilty	2(9%)	7(30%)	8(35%)	6(26%)
5. Investigation and measures	0	4(11%)	23(64%)	9(25%)
6. Lee mishandled nuclear data	0	6(19%)	16(50%)	10(31%)
7. National security is in danger	1(3%)	8(27%)	16(53%)	5(17%)
8. Lee is a spy	0	3(27%)	3(27%)	5(46%)
9. China's espionage on US	4(12%)	12(35%)	15(44%)	3(9%)

**Table 5 frequency of front-page themes and percentage**

Themes	Frequency	Percent
1. Criticism on espionage hysteria	0	0
2. Voices from China	0	0
3. Criticism on mishandling of Lee's case	5	12.8
4. Lee is not guilty	7	17.9
5. Investigation and measures (neutral)	4	10.3
6. Lee mishandled nuclear data	2	5.1
7. National security is in danger	5	12.8
8. Lee is a spy	3	7.7
9. China's espionage on US	13	33.3
Total	39	100.0

**Table 6 Mean of Length of front-page stories**

Themes	length
1. Criticism on espionage hysteria	0
2. Voices from China	0
3. Criticism on mishandling Lee's case	1344
4. Lee is not guilty	1675
5. Investigation and measures (neutral)	807
6. Lee mishandled nuclear data	1097
7. National security is in danger	1534
8. Lee is a spy	1384
9. China's espionage on US	2097

(the mean difference is significant at .05 level)

**TABLE 7: Exclusive words**

USE, MAKE, WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, HOW, WHY, IT'S, IT'S, THE, BUT, ANY, CAN, THIS, THAT, AND, HAVE, FOR, ARE, HAS, THEM, THESE, OUR, YOUR, YOURS, OURS, THEIRS, THEIR, AS, HAD, WITH, ALSO, FROM, WERE, WHILE, THEN, NOW, HERE, THERE, CAME, INTO, DURING, THEY'D, AFTER, MRS, MISS, MISTER, THEY, MAY, SHALL, DID, DIDN'T, ISN'T, SHE, HER, HIM, YET, GET, DEPT, GIVE, THUS, GOES, GONE, ECT, GOT, MID, OWN, VERY, EVERY, EACH, SOME, MUCH, ONLY, GAVE, BEING, WHICH, HER'S, BEEN, USING, HER'S WENT, MADE, UNTIL, SAID, SAY, EITHER, OTHER, MORE, LESS, ALL, ONTO, DONE, SAW, DOES, NOT, BOTH, NEITHER, NOR, ALTHOUGH, THOUGH, WOULD, COULD, SHOULD, ABOUT, BECAUSE, BECAME, OFF, A, AN, ANOTHER, AS, AT, BACK, BE, BEFORE, BESIDES, BETWEEN, BY, COME, DO, EVEN, HE, HI, HIMSELF, IF, IN, IS, IT, JUST, LIKE, MANY, MOST, MUST, MY, NO, OF, ON, ONE, OR, OUT, SAME, SEE, SINCE, SO, STILL, SUCH, THAN, THOSE, THROUGH, TO, TOO, UP, WAY, U, I

**Table 8: words adjusted in CATPAC analysis**

Wen Ho Lee →Lee
Janet Reno→Reno
Bill Clinton→Clinton
Los Alamos →LosAlamos
Federal Bureau of Investigation → FBI
F.B.I. → FBI
United States → UnitedStates
Energy Department → EnergyDepartment
White House → Whitehouse
Laboratory, laboratories, labs→ Lab
Spies, spying → spy
Steals, stole, stolen→ steal

**Figure1: Word Frequency**

TOTAL WORDS 2243 TOTAL UNIQUE WORDS 40

DESCENDING FREQUENCY LIST			ALPHABETICALLY SORTED LIST		
WORD	FREQ	PCNT	WORD	FREQ	PCNT
NUCLEAR	211	9.4	ACCUSED	29	1.3
LAB	138	6.2	ADMINISTRATION	21	0.9
SECRETS	129	5.8	AMERICAN	38	1.7
LOSALAMOS	127	5.7	BAIL	29	1.3
SCIENTIST	126	5.6	CASE	105	4.7
LEE	115	5.1	CHINA	109	4.9
CHINA	109	4.9	CHINESE	44	2.0
CASE	105	4.7	CLASSIFIED	25	1.1
WEAPONS	92	4.1	CLINTON	31	1.4
GOVERNMENT	82	3.7	COMPUTER	34	1.5
SECURITY	80	3.6	COURT	17	0.8
NATIONAL	74	3.3	DATA	22	1.0
SPY	64	2.9	ENERGYDEPARTMENT	23	1.0
OFFICIALS	57	2.5	ESPIONAGE	30	1.3
FEDERAL	47	2.1	EVIDENCE	22	1.0
CHINESE	44	2.0	FBI	35	1.6
AMERICAN	38	1.7	FEDERAL	47	2.1
FBI	35	1.6	GOVERNMENT	82	3.7
STEAL	35	1.6	INFORMATION	18	0.8
SUSPECT	35	1.6	INTELLIGENCE	25	1.1
COMPUTER	34	1.5	INVESTIGATION	31	1.4
CLINTON	31	1.4	JUDGE	23	1.0
INVESTIGATION	31	1.4	LAB	138	6.2
ESPIONAGE	30	1.3	LEE	115	5.1
MISHANDLING	30	1.3	LOSALAMOS	127	5.7
ACCUSED	29	1.3	MISHANDLING	30	1.3
BAIL	29	1.3	NATIONAL	74	3.3
UNITEDSTATES	29	1.3	NUCLEAR	211	9.4
CLASSIFIED	25	1.1	OFFICIALS	57	2.5
INTELLIGENCE	25	1.1	PRESIDENT	17	0.8
ENERGYDEPARTMENT	23	1.0	RENO	22	1.0
JUDGE	23	1.0	SCIENTIST	126	5.6
DATA	22	1.0	SCIENTISTS	22	1.0
EVIDENCE	22	1.0	SECRETS	129	5.8
RENO	22	1.0	SECURITY	80	3.6
SCIENTISTS	22	1.0	SPY	64	2.9
ADMINISTRATION	21	0.9	STEAL	35	1.6
INFORMATION	18	0.8	SUSPECT	35	1.6
COURT	17	0.8	UNITEDSTATES	29	1.3
PRESIDENT	17	0.8	WEAPONS	92	4.1

Figure 2: Clusters

## WARD'S METHOD

## **Individual Perceptions of International Correspondents in the Middle East: An Obstacle to Fair News?**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper examines the issues international correspondents have cited in various surveys and interviews as obstacles to fair reporting in the Middle East over the past 30 years. Using the hierarchy of influences approach, it is an examination of the individual influences of journalists' perceptions on media content, and how their perceptions may affect stories filed from the Middle East. Potential impact of organizational pressures and routines of the news production process on news from the Middle East is also assessed.

## **Introduction**

After the tragic experience of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Middle East reemerged as a prominent topic in American news. This information is transmitted to the American public through men and women in the conflicted region, as well as their editors, producers and news directors at headquarters back home. A steady stream of broadcast, print and online reports are filed from Jerusalem, Cairo, Amman, Beirut and Baghdad by journalists working long hours under ever-tighter and more demanding deadlines. They must meet rigorous 24-hour formats, while fueled by the heightened emotions of the current 'War on Terrorism'.

According to first-hand testimonials from correspondents, editors and producers in various branches of American media, the Middle East is one of the most difficult regions in the world to cover. Faced with volatile and highly charged situations and attitudes, journalists working in Arab countries as well as Israel face enormous personal and professional challenges. As the "peace process" fades into a distant memory, Israelis and Palestinians have practically declared full-scale war on each other. When both parties are as bent as ever on mutual destruction, it becomes even more relevant to examine those journalistic challenges and to ask: What factors influence those brave men and women reporting from the Middle East?

Since Israel's founding in 1948, American correspondents have faced a barrage of condemnation from both Arab and Israeli academics and critics for their coverage of the Middle East. There has been a well-documented trend of derogatory media coverage of

Arabs and Palestinians during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which has contributed to stereotyping and distortion of Arab communities in the Western hemisphere (Moussa, 1984, Suleiman, 1988 Ghareeb, 1983, Kamalipour, 1997). This distortion continues, and has been amplified by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as well as deteriorating tolerance in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

As with any rule, there are exceptions. During certain periods in contemporary history, criticism of Israeli policies has appeared in American media, particularly during the extended coverage of Israeli-Lebanese combat (Roeh, 1981) and the first Palestinian Intifada of 1987-1989 (Gilboa, 1989). Nevertheless, for the most part, the Arab perspective remains misunderstood and stereotyped today, and many American publications and television news networks have adopted and accepted the official Israeli viewpoint to explain the ongoing violence (Said, 2001).

### **A Hierarchy of Influences Approach**

The hierarchy of influences model (Reese & Shoemaker, 1996) offers an explanation of how various ideological, organizational, extra-media, routines and individual pressures can influence media content. While taking all of these influences into consideration, this paper focuses on the impact of individual perceptions of the journalist, i.e. the potential impact of personal beliefs, professional perceptions and schema on news. How do journalists view covering the Middle East? What are the obstacles they face, and why do they matter? There is much research to be conducted on the ideological, organizational and extra-media influences on media content about the

Middle East, but fortunately there is rich literature including in-depth interviews and testimonials which can provide a glimpse of the individual level impact of the journalist on the stories that they file from around the world.

From macro to micro-level analysis, the hierarchy of influences approach looks at the forces that shape media messages on separate yet related levels. There is undoubtedly more than one factor that determines the characteristics of media content. The ideological level of analysis is concerned with how the meaning of a media text serves ideological power interests. Theories of hegemony and of the news paradigm of objectivity fit into this category of analysis. The disproportionate reliance of journalists on official sources, lack of independent opinions that contradict the accepted norm, and the comfortable acceptance of Western societal values as the guiding structure to reporting are symptoms of a strong ideological influence of elite sources on media content. When the ideological paradigm is violated, the repercussions can be severe, whether it is from the journalist or the editor. But usually, higher positions in journalism are not achieved until the 'rules' have been clearly internalized and the individual has become 'socialized' into the newsroom (Breed, 1955).

When applied to the Middle East, ideological influences on media content include the foreign policies of successive political administrations in the United States towards the conflicted region (Karl, 1983) as well as information control exerted by military and diplomatic channels, as exemplified by coverage of the Gulf War (Reese&Buckalew, 1995). Studies that acknowledge and examine the potential for ideological influence on stories from the Middle East are extremely valuable for understanding the bigger picture. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, Chomsky 1983, Said 1997).

But the ideological influences are clearly not enough to provide a complete picture of what determines media content. Extra media influences, such as advertisers, media watchdog groups, powerful religious pressure groups and political interest groups. These are the countless organizations dedicated to pressuring the media with what Chomsky and Herman refer to in their propaganda model as, "flak", i.e. repeated criticism of media coverage including letters, phone calls and legal threats. Groups such as the Jewish Defense League, the Arab American Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC) and others are devoted to ensuring that the media organizations in the United States hear their concerns about media coverage of the Middle East.

In a commercially operated media system, the impact of influential advertisers should not be undermined. If media coverage of the Mideast is deemed too offensive for advertisers to bear, funding valuable to the media organization can be wielded as a weapon against slanted coverage of the region. In addition, the relevance of various think tanks and "experts" as sources for media coverage of the Middle East also is an important factor to consider examining in order to understand the wide range of influences on media content. These sources may include academics, individuals and informed groups who are accessible to the media for an ever-increasing demand for running commentary on the Middle East.

The next level of analysis is the influence of the media organizational factors. An organization chart of employees at a media institution reveals the structure of power between the reporters, editors, advertising departments, senior management and, most notably, the ownership level. These relationships form the skeleton of what is essentially the media organization responsible for the output of profitable media content. In the

United States and elsewhere around the world, commercial media must answer to its advertisers, and this dynamic can create a dilemma for the quality of news and allocation of resources (McChesney, 1997). Lines between the editorial and business aspects of journalism in America have become more blurred, and interventions by upper management in editorial policy can be common at privately-run media enterprises (Husseini & Naureckas, 1993).

But to produce profitable content, media organizations must maintain the highest standards of media routines. The news production process itself is another crucial factor in determining the shape of news content. Tight deadlines, limited background research opportunities and space constraints are also elements that can profoundly influence the manner in which news is presented as a final product. What starts out in the reporter's mind may not always end up in the newspaper or on television. The editing hoops that a story must jump through are put in place to help improve the quality of the stories, but these practices often end up distorting what the story was originally planned to cover.

Media routines are institutionalized ways of reporting stories. They are journalistic conventions, news values and norms such as timeliness, proximity, human interest and conflict or controversy. Another familiar media routine is that of objectivity. The Middle East is one of the most difficult regions to cover while keeping all parties satisfied. Trudy Rubin, a *Christian Science Monitor* Middle East correspondent said, “[It] is a place where on both sides there is somehow an assumption that if you're not 100 percent for us, then you're an enemy. So, neutral and objective coverage is something that's not regarded as a virtue.” (Ghareeb, 1983). Objectivity is a goal all correspondents strive for, but those covering the Middle East find it particularly difficult to achieve.

Other routine practices include reliance on wire services and other media as sources of news and story ideas, the pack journalism mentality and emphasis on 'exclusive' coverage.

### **Organizational and Routines Influences on Coverage of the Middle East**

With the often fast-breaking crisis-oriented nature of news from the Middle East, accurate and fair coverage depend on resource allocation, reliable sources and trust between the reporter in the field and his or her supervisors and editors. Adequate financial resources are essential to fair reporting in the Middle East, and they can often serve to facilitate access to Arab areas. Lederman cites an example where reporters had to get out into Palestinian areas during the Intifada and renting cars was a necessity because of the damage inflicted upon cars by stone throwers (Lederman, 1992). However, strong financial resources sometimes enable news organizations to send in crisis reporting teams, or 'parachuters.' This type of reporting has been criticized for its superficiality, and the lack of background knowledge from the people being sent to the area often for the first time (Hess, 1996).

NBC correspondents wistfully recall the days when they were part of the 'elite' foreign news services who could spend time in the region, familiarizing themselves with background, culture and history, but now they send in the new, young crews, who can keep up with the demanding pace of breaking news. Foreign television correspondence is a very demanding job, with long hours due to time differences. With the demands of television, there is often no time for background or context. (Hershman & Griggs, 1981).

Reporters function in a system of gates (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). News, as a product, comes through an assembly line, where individual reporters contribute to the final product without taking ownership or full responsibility. Reporters can express more freedom in their interpretation of issues, but professional routines and standards restrict them (Hallin, 1992). Journalists who master these standards are regarded as professionals and have a better chance of career progress (Tuchman, 1977). Reporters often are not encouraged for their independent thinking. Lacking external and reliable standards and benchmarks to measure their performance, correspondents tend to rely on each other, and especially the wire services, but they are at the same time competitive, so journalists learn their routines and news values from each other as group think tanks.

Breed's (1955) study of social control in the newsroom finds that smaller papers are often prompted by larger national newspapers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. New reporters quickly conform to the unwritten policies of their organizations, under pressure to do what is expected of them, including particular interpretations of political parties and economic interests. Reporters in time learn self-regulation and self-censorship.

Often, this pressure in the case of the Middle East can be manifested in the form of pressure from local lobby groups, historically Jewish community groups and organizations, and in recent years, Arab-American groups like the ADC. Pressure can also come from increased levels of negative feedback by regular viewers who are not part of an ethnic organization.

Other reasons journalists, including correspondents, will voluntarily conform to an organization's policies include the institutional authority of the publishers, the

reporter's career ambitions and socialization with editors and colleagues. Those who dissent find themselves unpublished, careers blocked, rewards denied and relations with editors and fellow reporters affected. Reporters who conform to organizational policies and routines are more published, recognized, promoted and offered the best assignments (Breed, 1955).

This relationship between editors and reporters is usually manifested with young reporters that are new to the organization. The reporters and correspondents with more seniority and influence within the organization are the ones who are more likely to get their views published regardless of whether they conform with the official policies, whether they are economic policies, political issues or foreign policy. Veteran correspondents like Christiane Amanpour of CNN or Deborah Sontag of the *New York Times* are less likely to have to conform to editorial pressure about their stories from the Middle East. Naturally, the opposite is also true. Often, the editors and sub-editors have no experience with foreign correspondence, and end up editing copy out of sheer ignorance and unfamiliarity with the material, or for space considerations.

### **Influence of Individual Perceptions and Background on Mideast News**

Schema theory (Graber, 1984), suggests that an individual's background and previous experiences can shape the way they perceive the world. When foreign correspondents are in the field, they carry with them all the preconceived notions about the country and their positive and negative experiences of it. Schema theory essentially negates the routine of objectivity. Particularly when speaking of Americans covering the

Middle East, objectivity is an elusive concept. Perhaps what reporters in that region should strive for instead is honesty in reporting. The worst misconception about objectivity is that it makes false claims about unbiased truth, and oversimplifies reality. Objective journalists deny their subjectivity, instead of acknowledging it and critically challenging it. The other end of the objectivity spectrum is propaganda, which is just as dishonest. ‘Honest’ reporting falls between objectivity and propaganda, and aims for a creative dialogue, instead of a dominant reduction or false construction of reality (Pedyty, 1995, p. 227).

Table I\* (see appendix) demonstrates how factors intrinsic to the communicator may influence media content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Correspondents, like the rest of us, are inherently subjective. American correspondents in the Middle East may not have much prior exposure to the region before they are posted there. Education on the Middle East in High schools and Middle schools is minimal (Suleiman, 1988). Edmund Ghareeb, a former journalist, who conducted dozens of interviews with American correspondents and journalists about the Middle East believes education and awareness is a key issue. “Part of the problem is ignorance. Most Americans have had only the most fleeting and superficial exposure to Middle East history and culture in their educational experience, and too often this brief glimpse is distorted and confirms inaccurate stereotypes of the Arabs.” (Ghareeb, 1983, p. 5). Naturally, one must hesitate to generalize, since there were and still are American correspondents in the region today who are well educated in Middle Eastern history and culture and may have even taken university courses on the Middle East. But even with education, there are several versions of history. Middle East Studies departments in the U.S. are often highly focused on Israel

and its role in the region, which can also provide a distorted or one-sided background picture.

Personal values and beliefs can also affect media content. Gans (1979) lists a few notions and values he believes are shared by American reporters. They include altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, moderation and ethnocentrism. Edward Said's work highlights the cultural lenses through which American reporters cover the Middle East and Islam (Said, 1997). He argues that ethnocentrism among correspondents stems from a historically Euro-centric, or an 'Orientalist' representation of Arabs and Islam which began with European studies of the region in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Said, 1979). Ethnocentrism among American reporters is defined as a tendency to value American practices and way of life above all others, meaning that a country covered by a foreign correspondent is judged against an American standard. In the case of reporting from the Middle East, this ethnocentrism can lead to a conscious or unconscious leaning towards Israel. This makes cultural and historical ties to Israel appear stronger, and American reporters more likely to identify with Israeli values, thereby categorizing Arab culture and values as alien and part of an 'other'. Although highly critical of almost all coverage from the Middle East, Said admits that European journalists do a much better job of reporting the Middle East than American ones do, since they tend to spend much more time in the region than American journalists, thereby gaining more background knowledge and experience.

Moderatism is another value that affects reporting. It implies that extremism in any form should be rejected. In terms of Middle East reporting, this can work both ways. The right-wing fundamentalist Israeli Likud party has historically received less

favorable coverage from the American media than the Labor party, which is more likely to promote peace with the Palestinians. Similarly, Islamic revivalism and harsh Arab and Muslim rhetoric are also rejected by correspondents, due to their inherent leaning towards moderation.

Edward Mortimer, a former foreign correspondent and editorial writer for the *Times* of London, agrees that individual perceptions will affect coverage. He believes that the composition of the picture painted by a correspondent will be determined by the reporter's subjectivity, and that fact is unavoidable. Critics of foreign reporting, he says, must be aware that journalists' perception of reality is shaped by their own personalities, and like all human beings, journalists have preconceptions and values that influence their attitudes and their images of other groups, nations and civilizations (Mortimer, 1981).

Lederman explains that the foreign reporting on the Intifada was the product of thought processes that had been under way for many years. "The personal and professional baggage the resident correspondents brought to their tasks was the product of innumerable small and large confrontations they had with the other players over previous years, anticipation of what their editors would expect from them under the circumstances, prior experiences they had elsewhere, and their own perception of what foreign journalism entails." (Lederman, 1992, p. 5).

But, a clear drawback of this argument is that it is very difficult to substantiate, even when surveying the correspondents themselves. When asked directly whether these perceptions influence coverage, journalists are likely to invoke professionalism and defend their objectivity. In a survey of journalists covering the Middle East for the *New*

*New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, Batarfi (1999) asked if their own ethnicity, language, religion and cultural identity influenced their reporting. The respondents acknowledged that such biases exist, against their best intentions. "Yes and no," replied a *New York Times* reporter. "It is a matter of professionalism and the nature of the place you write or correspond for. At the end of the day, opinion does slip into coverage. How much of it depends on how rigorous the standards of the establishment you work for. Having said that, it is up to the reporter to decide what story he or she wants to pick." Howard Schneider of the *Washington Post* agrees. "Ultimately, [it is] a question of how we know what we think we know, and every human on the planet faces limits in that regard. To say it affects their coverage is only to say 'they' are human. My background might make me blind and narrow-minded...it might make me more sensitive and open." Other journalists are more defensive. Nora Boustany of the *Washington Post* says personal backgrounds should not affect a professional journalist.

The final factor worth mentioning within the realm of personal background and experiences is the ethnicity or religion of the reporter. This is a difficult and sensitive issue, whether or not Jewish reporters are more likely to exhibit a pro-Israeli, anti-Arab bias. Studies have shown that a majority of American journalists are secular, and do not attend any religious services, (Lichter et al., 1986) whereas a significant proportion of reporters as well as network producers are Jewish and a majority of reporters whether Jewish or Gentile, are strong supporters of Israel (Epstein, 1974, Lichter, 1981). There is also a wide scope of opinion among American Jews regarding support for Israeli policies. Survey data can provide interesting and relevant data for examination. However, one

must take great care and precaution not to make generalizations or assumptions about religious affiliation and political views among journalists.

Nawawy's (2001) in-depth interviews with Western correspondents in the Middle East reveal that many of them believe religion is not a significant factor affecting their ability to report from the region. However, a few of them admitted that it makes a difference. Some correspondents said religion was a major factor. Those included Jeff Abramowitz, a Tel Aviv correspondent for the German News Agency, who said, "Religion is definitely important in dealing with the current Israeli government, which is a conservative, right-wing, religious government. This government regards me as not really part of the 'Jewish family' because I am working for the foreign press. Although I am Jewish, this government considers me an outsider." Another German correspondent in Israel, Astrid Frohloff, bureau chief of SAT.1, German TV, said, "Everything in Israel is based on religion, and this is hard for us to understand because we come from different cultural and religious backgrounds. As a woman, I always have a great difficulty in approaching the ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel, who refuse to talk to women as part of their religious beliefs." (Nawawy, 2001).

A Belgian correspondent in Jerusalem, Renee-Anne Gutter, said Israeli officials trust Jewish correspondents more, and therefore, they might provide more information to Jews than Gentiles. "It does not, however, affect the quantity of information as much as it affects the attitudes. Israelis are more friendly to Jewish correspondents than they are to non-Jewish ones," Gutter said. "If you share the religion with a party or a politician in Israel," said Inge Gunther, a Jerusalem-based German correspondent, "your job becomes easier. Sometimes there is the impression that you, as a non-Jewish person, will be

treated as an 'outsider' and will get only part of the official side of the story." A few correspondents in Cairo and Jerusalem said Jewish journalists might have a hard time dealing with the people. "Religion here is not really important except when I am asked if I am a Jew," said a Cairo-based U.S. correspondent. "I usually reply that I am Catholic, and this makes people feel more at ease. If I were Jewish, people would be more reserved with me."

ABC's Peter Jennings is among the critics of appointing American Jewish reporters as Middle East correspondents. "I personally think it is unfortunate that we do assign Jews to work in Israel. I think the inference or the suspicion, whatever it is, would be the same by having an Egyptian correspondent serving ABC in Egypt; I am against having a Jewish or Israeli correspondent serving ABC in Israel. I don't think that one can automatically challenge objectivity, but I think it is safer to choose the most neutral route possible." (Ghareeb, 1983). Other journalists like Howard Schneider of the *Washington Post* disagree, and insist that religion isn't a factor in foreign reporting. "To say a Christian, for example, can't write sensitively about Muslims means Blacks should never write about the President, men should never write about women and fat guys should never write about athletes. Now that's narrow-minded." (Batarfi, 1999).

Aspects of foreign reporting that have not been as frequently examined are the views and attitudes of the correspondents themselves. Who are these correspondents? What are the reasons that they give for the content of their coverage?

## **Correspondents' Views on Covering the Middle East**

The first question is: who are these people? Surveys of foreign correspondents in the Middle East are rare, and should be periodically updated by media researchers. Sreebny (1979) conducted a survey of American correspondents covering the region since 1973. Results indicated that they had an average of 14 years foreign reporting experience, and 39% of them had covered over 15 countries. Very few of them spoke either Hebrew or Arabic. While most correspondents surveyed felt like political and military news was sufficiently covered, a large majority said there was not enough coverage of religious, social and cultural news.

Half of the respondents in the 1979 survey believed an anti-Arab and pro-Israeli bias existed, however, they felt the bias decreased after the 1973 war. When asked about the major problems they face, journalists in the Middle East focused on issues such as censorship, restrictions, cultural gaps between foreign correspondents and the Arab World, biased coverage of the region by US news media, and widespread distrust and suspicion of foreign journalists, especially American reporters. A number of the journalists interviewed in the '70s called for correspondents to learn Arabic and undergo regional studies prior to their dispatch to the Middle East.

Over three decades later, some of the problems faced by these journalists remain persistent, although it appears there has been some development in terms of language skills and access. More recently, a survey of foreign journalists in Israel and Egypt

(Nawawy, 2001) found that almost 70 percent were males with an average of eight years of reporting experience in the Middle East. A third of the correspondents surveyed were American, with the majority from European countries. Nawawy finds that although there were more Jewish correspondents in Israel than Moslem correspondents in Egypt, most of the western journalists in Cairo and Jerusalem said they did not practice any religion. Correspondents in both countries were more likely to speak Arabic than Hebrew, and 95% of correspondents interviewed were college graduates.

In open-ended responses to survey questions, correspondents in Israel told Nawawy that they felt comfortable reporting on Israeli society, which they describe as politically and culturally westernized, with no restrictions on information. The correspondents said Israeli society appreciates Western news values: democracy and freedom of speech. Western correspondents in Cairo said Egyptian authorities are not supportive of the free press principle, and are chronically suspicious of Western journalists' motives. Egyptian officials were described as having low tolerance for criticism from the correspondents. The author says, "The suspicion many Egyptians (officials and non-officials) have of foreigners, especially Westerners, results from the fact that the "West" is associated in their minds with colonialism and foreign conspiracies to destroy the country's image. This widens the gap between the two sides." (page #??)

In terms of access, CNN's Jerusalem bureau chief, Walter Rodgers, told Nawawy, "For a journalist, Israel is the best country in the world to work in because it is far more open than what you would find in many Third World countries. On the Palestinian side, as it is the case in the rest of the Arab World, there is always that deep divide between Islam and the West." (Nawawy, 2001). Twenty years earlier, John Cooley (formerly with

the Christian Science Monitor and ABC News) says stifling of access can be felt by foreign correspondents in the form of travel restrictions to places like the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. Visas take months to clear, and even when they do, officials place restraints on reporting like interfering with communications back to the editors. Even when access is made available, it is very difficult for Western correspondents to do independent investigating, since they are often escorted, i.e. supervised, by representatives from information ministries.

Another problem is gaining access to members of opposition groups, to gain a fuller picture of the politics in the region (Cooley, 1981). Censorship, he says, is everywhere, but particularly noticeable when reporting on the Israelis. All outgoing copy, communications, pictures and film are monitored by the military. Military censorship will increase during times of crisis and war. In the Middle East, this means that censorship is present all the time. However, during times of intense conflict, like the Intifada and the Gulf War, Israeli censorship became a major obstacle to objective and independent reporting from the region (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Israeli military censorship continues to be an obstacle to fair coverage even today.

During the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Israeli military censorship became frustrating for many American correspondents. Mort Rosenblum describes trying to write a story on Israeli jets bombing a Palestinian refugee camp in South Lebanon. "I only reported what happened. Soon afterward, the Tel Aviv bureau told me censors had killed my dispatch. I was mistaken, my colleagues had been told. The jets were hitting near Beirut. Please tell them, I said, that I can recognize an air strike, especially when I'm standing under it. An hour later, Tel Aviv said the story had died for security reasons.

Tell them, I said, that Palestinians don't need to read the AP wire to know that bombs are landing on their heads. The story stayed killed." (Rosenblum, 1993).

According to Jim Hoagland, former managing editor of the Washington Post, independent coverage of the Iran-Iraq war by American correspondents was virtually impossible simply because they could not gain access to either country. "Neither Iran or Iraq had diplomatic relations with the US, so they were facing an American government that treated the war with neglect as a deliberate strategy." (Ghareeb, 1983). Access is particularly restricted to television crews all over the Middle East. It is easier in some countries, notably Israel and Egypt, but it can be very difficult in countries like Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Customs officials can hold up TV crews for hours, scrutinizing their equipment and confiscating their film, while print journalists only have to enter the country with, "a toothbrush and a notepad." (Hershman & Griggs, 1981).

Although Egypt is generally open to press coverage, reporting about military bases, oil fields or the Libyan border are clearly off-limits to foreign correspondents. Jordan is also difficult to cover because of internal travel restrictions and the fact that to film anything, the crews needed to obtain permission from the government beforehand. ABC crews spent months trying to get visas to Syria and when they finally did, the correspondent was only able to file a few stories. Visas are also a major access issue in Afghanistan, Iran, Morocco, Algeria, the Gulf States and Sudan (Hershman & Griggs, 1981). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, issues of access may have eased in comparison with the early 80s, but they remain a serious challenge to objective reporting on current developments. Access to government officials, the military and certain areas of Afghanistan was restricted during the military operations following September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Saudi Arabia is a particularly challenging country to get news from. The Saudis are intensely suspicious of American film crews. "If one wants to explore the reasons why clichés about Saudi Arabia have persisted so long after other notions about the Middle East have been dispelled from the American conscience one needn't go much further than this denial of access to the most important American news medium." (Ibid, 1981). One example is attempted coverage of the attack on Mecca's Kaa'bah (Grand Mosque) in November 1979. The circumstances and causes of this event in Saudi Arabia's political history have never been adequately explained in America, because journalists couldn't get in. But 23 years later, Saudi Arabia is beginning to get more media savvy. After the Gulf war, reporting from Saudi Arabia became easier than before. Many Western journalists maintained contact with local Saudi reporters and editors who had become emboldened by the war and began to subtly liberalize the media. Select television crews, like ABC's 20/20, were allowed into Saudi Arabia to conduct interviews with its government officials in March 2002. The internet and satellite television will enable Saudi Arabia to have its voice heard in the international community.

In Israel, reporting under fire can pose serious challenges. During the height of the first Intifada, or popular uprising, the Israeli government repeatedly attempted and often succeeded in restricting journalists' access to stories. The strategy was to limit press coverage, thus perhaps boosting American public opinion of Israel. During the 1989-1993 Intifada, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) banned television crews from entering certain areas of the West Bank and Gaza strip, threatened journalists with arrest and declared the areas of unrest as closed military zones. The tactic worked, and led to a marked decline in

coverage of the occupied territories and an improvement in American public opinion towards Israel (Griffin, 1990). Even over a decade later, issues of access and censorship in Israel and the Occupied Territories remain prevalent. In 2001-2002 scores of foreign correspondents were attacked, harassed and punished by withdrawing their official access to government and military sources (CPJ, 2002).

The Gulf War remains another classic example of restricted access and censorship. The Pentagon and State Department's control and manipulation of the media was mainly achieved by restricting correspondents' access to events of the war (Bennet & Paletz, 1994). The same conditions exist in the current coverage of what President Bush calls the 'War on Terrorism'. In a study conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, American media heavily favored pro-Administration and official U.S. viewpoints by margins as high as 71% in their earlier coverage. As months passed after Sept. 11, perspectives became fairly broadened and balanced, but levels of criticism remained below 10% in the stories analyzed on television and in newspapers and magazines in the final months of 2001 (PEJ, 2001).

American journalists in the Middle East that work for mainstream media frequently cite access, censorship, restrictions and suspicion of them by people in the region, particularly Arabs, as obstacles to fair coverage. Nevertheless, there are clear examples of experienced, enterprising journalists who managed to cover difficult stories despite these limitations. Beyond these external concerns, there are also several internal, individual influences that affect correspondents' coverage of the Middle East. These include their educational and professional background, religious beliefs, personal attitudes and values and language. Factors affecting the way a correspondent covers the

Middle East are extremely difficult to substantiate, as Nawawy's study demonstrates. But theories about personal perceptions of journalists (Graber, 1984, Gans, 1979), and first-hand accounts of former Middle East correspondents may shed some light on this question.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The impact of a correspondents' background, religion, experiences, ideals and values on media content will remain a difficult issue to make indiscriminate statements about. Research about the impact of individual journalists' perceptions on media content reveals contradictory results (Shoemaker&Reese, 1996, p. 90-91) which is why it is difficult to say without further research what type of impact these perceptions are having on public opinion. However, based on the personal information shared above by former and current correspondents in the Middle East, one can at the very least say this aspect is certainly worthy of future studies, surveys and interviews. Issues affecting content via the news production process include the routines and organizational level influences, and so the potential impact of journalists' personal perceptions should - in theory - be curbed by gatekeeping editors back at headquarters, through which the news process flows. Undoubtedly this happens every day at elite publications and news organizations. However, there are also constraints at the news production level that perpetuate distortion, superficial reporting and stereotyping of Arabs. These factors include financial resources, pressures and demands of foreign correspondence, the routine phenomenon of

'groupthink' or 'pack journalism,' the practice of 'parachuting' or 'crisis journalism,' and organizational aspects of news production.

In-depth interviews with journalists and their editors reveal another level of the pressures newsrooms face due to their coverage of events in the Mideast. Some of the problems with covering the Mideast are caused by the very nature of the news medium itself. It is through first-hand accounts from journalists with extensive experience in covering the Middle East that an understanding of the pressures faced by reporters in the region may become more complete. These studies and testimony from correspondents in the region point to challenges which remain pertinent today. Problems with reporting on the Middle East continue to prevail and have arguably intensified after the horrific events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

The above research serves as a reminder of how timeless the issues are. Norman Soloman describes correspondents in the Middle East as among the brave and quotes Washington Post columnist Howard Kurtz. "Journalists are growing weary and depressed by all the Middle East violence -- suicide bombers in Jerusalem one day, Israeli soldiers killing West Bank people the next -- and the sheer level of killing has blurred any possible story line. Cease-fire attempts are routinely violated within hours." (Soloman, 2002). On many levels, it's the same old story, the violence and bad news has become routine. Issues of access and censorship are still hindering balanced and fair reporting from the region, and that too has become mundane for many correspondents. Intense battles in Spring 2002 between Israelis and Palestinians highlighted issues of access and censorship, particularly when the Israeli authorities did not initially allow journalists into

sensitive areas where Palestinians were being killed, like Jenin and Bethlehem (FAIR, 2002).

Access problems still prevail in Iraq and Algeria, where journalists are still closely monitored and only allowed to cover stories that are government approved. In Israel and the Occupied Territories, both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Defense Force imposed censorship on foreign correspondents trying to cover the escalating violence after Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> (Campagna, 2002). However, with the advent of the internet, access to news from the Middle East and views from the region has reached unprecedented levels. Ten years ago, if a story broke in Saudi Arabia, it would be difficult if not impossible to get a visa to enter the country to cover the story. With the internet, cell phones, fax machines and satellites (which remain restricted or officially banned) the access a western journalist now has to news from closed societies has become far easier, faster and more accurate than in the past.

European and American correspondents in the Middle East face numerous challenges to their professional objectivity when reporting from such a highly charged region. Beginning with the pressures of their jobs, they deal with censorship, restricted access and suspicion, which can lead to threats and intimidation. In addition, correspondents must acknowledge and deal with a host of individual influences including their perceptions, level of background and historical knowledge, in addition to cultural and language differences.

On an organizational level, the influence of the news production process involves issues of resource allocation, the 'groupthink' tendency and the practice of crisis journalism that often involves transplanting inexperienced journalists to a region

requiring depth of knowledge and cultivated sources to achieve fair and honest reporting. Unspoken yet persistent pressures within the organization itself can lead reporters to follow institutional rules. Those unspoken rules must be acknowledged and challenged by correspondents in the Middle East, as well as the news gatekeepers in the U.S. The September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the ensuing events in Israel and the Occupied Territories will be some of the most exigent chapters of our history for journalists to report on fairly and accurately. Correspondents and their editors need to take into consideration the paradigms that lie beyond what is comfortable and least likely to garner influential criticism. They need to take a reflective and normative look at how truly balanced their reporting is, and whether or not their background, education, religion and experiences with and in the Middle East have anything to do with it.

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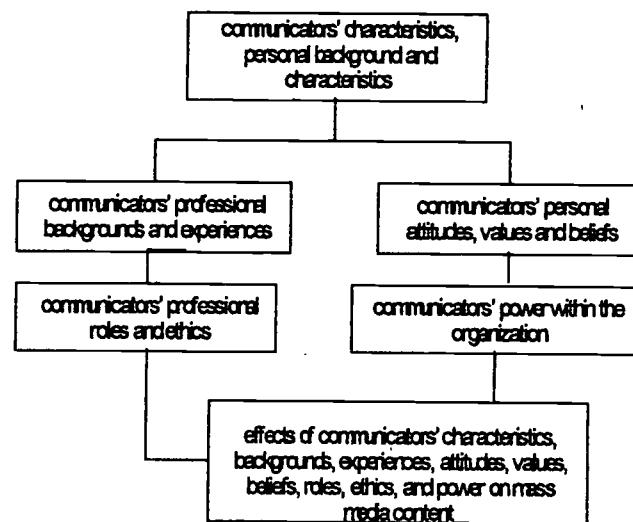
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## **Individual Influences on Media Content**



\* Shoemaker & Reese (1996).

*Intel*

**British vs. U.S. Newspaper Framing of Arabs in Coverage of the Middle-Eastern Conflict  
Pre and Post Sept. 11: A Case Study**

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**British vs. U.S. Newspaper Framing of Arabs in Coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict  
Pre and Post Sept. 11: A Case Study**

**ABSTRACT:**

This study looked at how British and U.S. newspapers framed Arabs in the coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict pre- and post-Sept. 11. Both countries used negative adjectives more frequently to describe Arabs than Israelis; however the adjectives used to describe killings by the groups were similar. Further, Sept. 11 did not appear to influence either country's coverage of the group.

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Due to the longevity of the Middle Eastern conflict, researchers have studied the portrayal of Arabs in the media for decades (Belkaoui, 1978; Barranco and Shyles, 1988; Whitehead, 1987; Liebes, 1992). Previous studies and commentaries have concluded that Arabs are associated with violence and terrorism and are often seen as the aggressors in the conflict with Israel (Barsamian, 2001; Lind and Danwoski, 1998). In fact, most media coverage of the group focuses on attacks, crises, invasions, murders, peace treaties, and battles.

Further, the literature focusing on the framing of Arabs, have shown that articles frame the group to emphasize group differences. For example, Liebes (1992) describes several ways that media favor Israelis over Arabs. She claims that several negative terms serve to bias viewers against Arabs. Similarly, Lind and Danwoski (1998) found that coverage of Arabs reflects a subordination of Arabs and Arab cultures, and reinforces the already-evident marginalization of Arabs and Arab cultures. These associations are so prevalent that the media are quick to blame Arabs for terrorist acts such as the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, even without any evidence (Bazzi, 1995 & Alter, 1995). Shaheen (1984) maintains that while the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s helped create more realistic television portrayals of African Americans and other ethnic minorities, the treatment of Arabs remained full of inaccurate myths and stereotypes.

While previous studies have analyzed media coverage of the Mid-East conflict in terms of Arabs vs. Israelis, there has been virtually no research that compares American and British coverage of Arabs with regard to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks<sup>1</sup>. This study examined the two countries' framing of Arabs in coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict pre- and post-Sept. 11 to assess if the terrorist attacks on this date fostered any actual changes. Because the terrorist attacks were allegedly by people of Arab descent, and polls showed an increased support of Israelis following the attack (Pope, 2001), an increase in negative frames of Arabs following the event

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would support the argument that the media's framing of world events often coincide with the images and interpretations of both countries' national interests and political or cultural perspective (Rachlin, 1988).

The study's sample included articles from elite publications published four months before and after the attacks. These periods were selected to provide two samples that could be compared to assess the differences Sept. 11 made on the coverage of the conflict. In a quantitative analysis, the study looked at following questions: Was one country's media more likely to use negative frames to describe Arabs than the other? Was one country's media more likely to include victim names of Israelis than Arabs? Was one country more likely to use harsh adjectives to describe killings by Arabs and soft adjectives to describe killings by Israelis? Finally, were there any significant differences in how the two countries framed Arabs and Israelis pre- and post- Sept. 11?

These topics are important because the media help citizens make sense of the world around them, especially for depictions of people of different backgrounds. Additionally, the framing of issues has been shown to shape public perceptions of political issues or institutions (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Several studies have shown links between Arab portrayal in the media and public opinion about relevant issues (see Adams & Heyl, 1981 & Belkaoui). Further, newspaper articles provide historical content that may be used to analyze mistakes made by the media in covering various issues. Such an analysis may be used to help reporters improve their reporting strategies and to head off the repetition of mistakes.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical frameworks for this study are "hegemony/propaganda model" and "framing." Gramsci used the term "hegemony" to denote the predominance of one social class over

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others. The theory focuses on the ability of the dominant class to project its own way of seeing the world so that those who are subordinated by it accept it as natural.

According to Hall et al. (1980), the mass media often reproduce interpretations that serve the interests of the ruling class. The news performs a crucial role in defining events, although this is seen as secondary to the primary definers: accredited sources in government and other institutions. The media also reinforce a consensual viewpoint by using local idioms and by claiming to voice public opinion (Woollacott, 1982). Historically, these factors have led to negative media portraits of various nations and movements defined as enemies by the U.S. government.

Additionally, the propaganda model by Chomsky and Herman (1979) is pertinent. With concentrated ownership and profit-orientated mass media where advertising is the mass media's primary source of income, the media rely on information provided by government officials and by "experts." The model suggests that the mainstream media, commonly frame news and allow debate only within the parameters of elite interests. Analysts have argued convincingly that media frames are shaped by economic interests, dominant ideologies, government influences, and journalistic norms (Parenti, 1986 & Chomsky and Herman, 1979).

The concepts of hegemony and the propaganda model are useful for this analysis because Arabs are an ethnic group that is marginalized in the United States and Britain. In fact, polls show that Americans favor Israelis to Arabs. Shortly after Sept. 11, polls showed a surge of support for Israel, as Americans felt an immediate bond with a country that had endured similar terrorist strikes (Pope, 2001). When asked to name the causes of the terrorist attack in a recent University of Michigan poll, 82 percent cited Osama bin Laden, but 64 percent also cited U.S. support for Israel, while 51 percent named United States' failure to support Palestinians. Further, in a 2002 *Christian Science Monitor/TIPP* poll, Americans were twice as likely to say U.S. policy should become more

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pro-Israel, 20 percent, than pro-Palestinian, 10 percent. Further, about 42 percent said the current U.S. policy, which has included strong support of Israel, should be maintained (Sappenfield, 2002).

Additionally, soon after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks the media reported a perceived increase in discrimination against Muslims and Arabs (Fisk, 2002). An April 25, 2002, *New York Times* article reported that state and federal civil rights agencies were flooded with complaints from Muslims (Fisk, 2002). While a March 4, 2002, *Washington Post* article reported that the backlash against Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks is not over (Fisk, 2002).

### *Framing*

The hegemony concept meshes well with the concept of framing, which is useful for content analyses because print media do not communicate raw data—the reports themselves are representations of reality that are linked to the reporter's perceptions (Kern, 1981; Mowlana, 1984; Said, 1981). Further, stories contain contextual cues, or frames, which have been shown by researchers to induce patterns of judgments and opinions surrounding the issue in their audience. Gamson (1988) defines the function of a frame as answering the question, "What is the basic source of controversy or concern in this issue?" (p. 165). Another applicable definition is one by Entman (1993), who describes framing as a process by which certain aspects of a message are presented in such a way that they will be more prominent in the minds of the audience.

According to researchers, several factors may potentially influence how journalists frame an issue: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines and ideological or political orientations of journalists (e.g., Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978). Further, news frames are conceptual tools that the media rely on

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to convey, interpret and evaluate information. They can be observed by looking at factors that influence reporters, the outcome or newspaper.

Concerning Arabs, the media's knowledge of public polls, which showed support for Israelis, coupled with long-term stereotypes of Arabs might foster negative frames of the group in media coverage. Within the context of media coverage of ethnic groups, analyses demonstrate the manner in which dominant framing of other cultural and political groups within national boundaries has been negative and stereotypical. Since it appears that Americans are more supportive of Israelis than Arabs, the media should frame them more negatively. This would support assertions by such researchers as Chomsky and Herman (1979) and Hall (1980) who assert that the mass media follow elite views that reflect the beliefs of society and the status quo.

### *Arabs and Frames*

According to Christison (1997) the frame of reference within which Westerners perceive Arabs today began to form in the mid-nineteenth century when Western historians and Western Christian missionaries began visiting Palestine and conveying their impressions of the land and its peoples to readers and congregations in Europe and America. Said speculates that the negative perception of the group persisted because it is based deeply in religious roots, where Islam is seen as a kind of competitor of Christianity (Barsamian, 2000).

Studies have found key differences in how British and American media frame Arabs. For example, in a study of British and American coverage of Arabs, Whitehead (1987) found a more diversified portrayal of Arabs in the U.S.'s *Time* magazine than in Britain's *The Economist*. According to the researcher the British historical role as a colonizer, as well as American and British dependency on Arab oil appeared to have influenced portrayals of Arabs. For the study,

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sample articles from the American weekly *Time* magazine and the British weekly *The Economist* were examined for coverage of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Similarly, Sappenfield (2002) found that public sympathies for Arabs/Israelis are remarkably different in America and Europe. He found that Americans tend to feel close bonds with Israel, while Europeans feel a greater empathy for the Palestinians. He concluded that the trend has evolved over the years. Factors such as America's larger Jewish population and Europe's greater reliance on Arab oil shape beliefs.

Illustrating a pro-Israeli bias, media activist Ali Abunimah outlined several ways in which the mainstream American cover Arabs (Adas, 2001). According to Adas, American media present the conflict as though it were between equally matched opponents, with the Israeli army defending itself from Palestinian "gunmen." Armed Israeli settlers, on the other hand, are not called "gunmen," Abunimah pointed out that news reports keep statistical track of Palestinian deaths, but hide how the deaths occur or who the dead are. Furthermore, in media language, he contended, Arabs kill Israelis, but Arabs die as a result of "clashes." In addition, more often than not, names and autobiographies are included in news stories of Israeli "victims" of Palestinian violence. Pictures of family and friends often accompany the emotionally charged stories.

The European press has also been chastised for its coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict as well. In an Aug. 8, 2001 *Independent* column, Robert Fisk (2001) questioned what has happened to Britain's reporting of the Middle East, referring to a Reuter's dispatch from Hebron that stated, "Undercover Israeli soldiers shot dead a member of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction yesterday in what Arabs called an assassination." Fisk questioned the use of the phrase, "what Arabs called an assassination." "Any sane reader would conclude immediately that Imad Abu Sneiheh, who was

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shot in the head, chest, stomach and legs by 10 bullets fired by Israeli agents had been murdered, let alone assassinated."

*After Sept. 11*

According to Said (2001), since Sept. 11, there has been an organized media campaign in the United States that imposes the Israeli vision of the world on Americans, with practically nothing to counter it. The main themes of this school of thought, according to Said, are Islam and the Arabs are the true causes of terrorism; Israel has been facing such terrorism all its life; Arafat and Bin Laden are basically the same thing; and most U.S. Arab allies, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have played a clear negative role in sponsoring anti-Americanism, supporting terrorism, and maintaining corrupt, undemocratic societies.

Since history repeats itself, the media may become more biased during wartime efforts. Previously, the use of partiality toward ones country has become more prevalent in the context of conflict coverage (e.g. Nohrstedt et al., 2000; and Reese and Buckalew, 1995; and Adas, 2000). For example, Norhrstedt et al. (2000) found that the context for war correspondents and media coverage of military operations in international conflicts was flooded with propaganda. "Almost every news source, PR officer or politician have, in one way or the other, vested interests in relation to the conflict and will only inform about things that presumably support their strategic and tactical objectives" (p. 384).

Vincent (2000) found evidence that the media's portrayal of the 1999 NATO bombing of Kosovo was composed mostly of official viewpoints that portrayed a pro-western point of view. Similarly, in their analysis of the Persian Gulf War, Reese and Buckalew (1995) found that the

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practices of newsrooms add up to frames of reference that support “administration policy.” These usually “aligned with public values, government/military and corporate interests” (p. 41).

Several scholars have suggested how and why media frames parallel U.S. policy. For instance, the reliance of news organizations on official government agencies and their press liaisons for information has been well documented (Sigal, 1973). Such dependence on agency press releases and briefings, essentially public relations operations, serves to blur the lines between the notions of an independent, public interest press and a press that facilitates the dispersion of official propaganda.

### *Hypotheses And Research Questions*

Based on a review of the literature, the following hypotheses and research questions were formulated:

H<sub>1</sub>: U.S. and European media are more likely to frame Arabs in a negative light than Israelis.

H<sub>2</sub>: U.S. newspapers will frame Arabs more negatively than their British counterparts.

H<sub>3</sub>: U.S. and European media are more likely to include the names of Israeli victims than Arab victims.

H<sub>4</sub>: U.S. and British media coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict would use harsh adjectives to describe killings by Arabs and soft adjectives to describe killings by Israelis.

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Were there any significant changes in the frames used to describe killings by Arabs pre- and post- Sept. 11?

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### *Rationale*

Media activists and scholars have outlined several ways in which the mainstream American media make use of a pro-Israeli bias, i.e., by omitting names and biographies of Arab victims (Adas, 2001); by describing Arabs who are killed or wounded as "bystander" "terrorist," or "stone-thrower" (Fraitekh, 2001); and by referring to dead Arabs by numbers only.

Because the terrorist attacks were allegedly by people of Arab descent, an increase in negative coverage of Arabs following the event would support the argument that the media's framing of world events often coincide with the images and interpretations of both countries' national interests and political or cultural perspective (Rachlin, 1988).

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Variables*

To assess how journalists framed Arabs, the study looked at the occurrence of Arabs or Israelis with the following terms: "terrorism," "guerrilla," "horrendous" and "militant." A high degree of negative terms to describe Arabs or Israelis will imply a negative frame. It also looked at the words used to describe killings in the Middle-Eastern conflict, comparing the terms used for one group with those used for the other groups. The terms: "targeted killing," "selective killing," were used for the soft connotation measure and "murdered" and "assassinated" were used for the harsher connotation measure (Fraitekh, 2001). Once again, a high degree of negative terms to describe Arab or Israeli killings will imply a negative frame. The victim identification measure looked at how the press identified victims killed in the Middle-Eastern conflict and assessed whether they were identified by name or left anonymous. A high level of anonymous victims might

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imply a negative frame since nameless victims do not take on a human quality to readers (Adas, 2001).

The study looked at four American and four British newspapers for purposive sampling. American newspapers were: the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*. These newspapers were chosen because they target large and diverse audiences. Furthermore, the *New York Times* is seen as America's leading news organization. Its content influences other newspapers, wire services, news magazines and television and radio news. The four British newspapers are: *The Independent*, *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian*. The newspapers are comparable in terms of readership, form and content with the U.S. newspapers used in this study.

The stories published by these newspapers were accessed using Lexis Nexis. The key words included: "Middle-Eastern conflict," Arab-Israeli conflict and "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." These are the key terms used to describe the Middle-Eastern conflict in the mainstream media. The time frame for the case study was June 11, 2001 to Jan. 11, 2002. Only those articles with these key words in the first three paragraphs were used. Fifty-three articles were selected; and the content was coded and analyzed with descriptive statistics.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Coding Scheme*

The coding scheme for the first study included four sections. The first section dealt with such details as date, newspaper, and type of story, feature, straight news or editorial. The second section looked at the occurrence of Arabs or Israelis with the following terms: "terrorism," "guerrilla," "horrendous" and "militant." And other. The third section looked at words used to

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describe killings: "targeted killing," "selective killings," "murdered" and "assassinated" (Fraitekh, 2001). The fourth section assessed how the victim was identified: anonymous versus named.

## FINDINGS

### *Sample*

After sorting through articles and eliminating opinion pieces and other stories that were irrelevant to this study, 53 articles were used. Of the 53 articles, 18.9 percent were from *Financial Times*, 15.1 percent were from the *Wall Street Journal*, and 13.2 percent were from the *Independent*, 11.3 percent were from the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, the *LA Times* and the *Washington Post*. Finally, 7.5 percent were from the *London Times*.

**Table 1. Frequencies of Newspapers**

Newspapers	Frequency	Percent
New York Times	6	11.3
L.A. Times	6	11.3
Washington Post	6	11.3
Wall Street Journal	8	15.1
London Times	4	7.5
Independent	7	13.2
Financial Times	10	18.2
Guardian	6	11.3
Total	53	100%

**Table 2. Occurrence of Arab- Israeli Articles Pre- and Post- Sept. 11**

Date	Frequency	Percent
Pre- Sept. 11	29	54.7
Post- Sept. 11	24	45.3
	53	100%

P=.562

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Apparently Sept. 11 did not make a significant difference in the number of articles published about the Middle-Eastern conflict ( $p=.562$ ). Twenty-nine of the articles were written before Sept. 11 and 24 were written after the event. This difference may be explained by an increase in newspaper coverage of the War on Terrorism, which followed Sept. 11. In addition, there was a decrease in the number of Arab-Israeli attacks during this period. In a comparison of coverage in each country, 16 articles were published in the United States before Sept. 11, while 10 articles were published after the event. On the other hand, 12 articles were published in British newspapers before Sept. 11 and 15 were published after the event. In addition, to the topics tested in the hypothesis and research questions, the recurring frames include: U.S. and British allies in the Middle-Eastern conflict and foreign policy gone wrong.

### *Hypotheses*

The first hypothesis, which stated U.S. and European media are more likely to frame Arabs in a negative light than Israelis was supported. The adjectives used by U.S. and British media to describe Arabs were more negative than those used to describe Israeli sources ( $p=.001$ ). The words: "terrorism," "guerrilla," "horrendous" and "militant." were used to describe Arabs much more frequently than Israelis (table 3). Out of negative adjectives found in the articles, 45 were used in reference to Arabs and 6 were used in reference to Israelis.

These results were not surprising since many of the stories described events in which Arabs attacked Israeli rather than vice versa. For example, an Oct. 2 *Independent* article by

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**Table 3. U.S. vs. British newspaper use of negative adjectives to describe Arabs**

Group	Frequency of negative terms	%	P
US	28	62	.0001
Britain	17	38	.0001
	45	100%	
<b>U.S. vs. British newspaper use of negative adjectives to describe Israelis</b>			
U.S.	2	33	*
Britain	4	67	
	6	100%	

\*sample too small for a p-value

Phil Reeves discussed how Palestinian "militants" in Gaza have penetrated settlements, and carried out killings during the past 12 months of bloodshed. In a Sept. 27 *Los Angeles Times* article, Tracy Wilkinson discusses how "radical" Islamic groups that have been responsible for most of the devastating suicide bombing attacks in Israel immediately rejected the cease-fire plan. Other articles did not use such adjectives to describe the group.

Hypothesis 2, which stated U.S. media will frame Arabs more negatively than British counterparts was not supported. There were no significant differences in the use of terms by both countries to describe Arabs. In the United States, 21 of 53 articles contained a negative terms to describe Arabs ( $p=.71$ ), while 24 of 53 British articles contained negative terms ( $p=.75$ ).

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**Table 4. U.S. and British newspaper ID of Israeli victims**

ID	Frequency	%	P
Not named	25	76	.378
Named	8	24	
	33	100%	
<b>U.S. and British newspaper ID of Arab victims</b>			
Not named	25	79	.378
Named	7	21	
	32	100%	

Hypothesis 3, which stated U.S. and European media are more likely to include names for Israeli victims than for Arab victims, was not supported,  $p=.378$ . Descriptive statistics, showed 33 of the 53 articles in this sample, focused included at least one reference to a killing, of those 33, 13 originated in the United States. Of those articles that referred to Israeli victims ( $n=13$ ), five included names, while eight did not. Of those articles that referred to Arab victims ( $n=13$ ), four included names, while nine did not. Of those articles that referred to Arab victims ( $n=12$ ), three included names and nine did not (table 4). These findings show there was not a significant difference in the occurrence of ID's for Arabs or Israelis. It appears that names were omitted for both groups. Names may have been omitted because they were not considered relevant to U.S. and British audiences. In articles that discussed deaths of American victims, names were often included. For example, in an Aug. 10 *Los Angeles Times* article by Mary Curtius, one person

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identified by name is Judith Greenbaum, a New Jersey student who was pregnant with her first child when she was killed by a suicide bomber.

Other articles included summaries of long lists of victims. This may also be due to the massive numbers of killings the articles discussed. For example, Phil Reeves wrote in the Oct. 3 *Independent* article that a gunman blasted his way into a beachside Jewish settlement in north-west, killing two teenagers—a girl and a boy—and that at least 10 people, including three Israeli soldiers, had been injured. Names were not used throughout the article to identify the victims. In a July 29 *New York Times* article, Clyde Haberman reported that “about 15 Israeli officers and more than 30 Arabs were reportedly injured, none critically when police officers fired stun grenades and tear gas in skirmishes with scores of young Arabs” (p. A3). In an Oct. 26 *Washington Post* article, Daniel Williams leaves anonymous the names of five Palestinian police. He writes, “Among those killed in the raid were five Palestinian policemen, town officials said” (p. A30).

Some of the articles used a delayed-identification format in which the victims were introduced later in the article. For example, in a July 21 *New York Times* article, Clyde Haberman wrote, “on both sides, victims have been ample, including a 3-month old Palestinian boy, who may be the youngest victim in a 10-month siege of despair in which other infants have been killed.” Near the bottom of the story Haberman includes the boy’s name, “For now, Israelis are braced less for observers than for reprisals after a drive-by shooting near Hebron on Thursday night that killed three Arabs. Among the victims was the 3-month-old boy, Diya Tmeizi” (p. 1).

Hypothesis 4, which stated U.S. and British media coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict would use harsh adjectives such as assassination and suicide bombing to describe killings by Arabs and soft adjectives such as “targeted” and “selective killing” to describe killings by Israelis, was not supported for either group (tables 5). Several themes emerged. The most

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**Table 5. U.S. and British newspaper wording of killings by Israelis**

country	targeted killing	selective killing	killing	Totals
Britain	4	2	6	12
U.S.	3	1	13	17
	7	3	7	29

interesting of which is the debate over the use of the term, "targeted killing." For example in an Aug. 5 Independent article by Robert Fisk, debate ensued over the BBC's decision to use the term. The article said, "Its World Service television presenters were obeying a scandalous new edict from their London editors that they must refer to Israeli assassinations as 'targeted killings' – the inoffensive phrase Israel wishes journalists to use. The phrase is in any case a lie: last week's 'killings' cost the live of a Palestinian journalist and two children as well as Hamas men" (p. 19). Fisk (2001) questioned the use of this phrase used in an article, "what Arabs called an assassination." He states "Any sane reader would conclude immediately that Imad Abu Seneh, who was shot in the head, chest, stomach and legs by 10 bullets fired by Israeli agents had been murdered, let alone assassinated." (p. 1).

In another article, Reeves (2001b) wrote that the Israeli Embassy's press secretary, David Schneeweis, publicly boasted that Israel has influenced the editorial policy of the BBC in its coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict influencing them to soften their language toward Israel—notably by describing the assassinations of Arabs by Israelis as "targeted killings."

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**Table 6. U.S. and British newspaper wording of killings by Arabs**

country	targeted killing	assassination	Suicide bombing	Totals
Britain	0	1	5	6
U.S.	0	1	13	14
	0	2	6	8

However, some newspapers gave in to the request. Examples of “targeted killing” were included an August 10, 2001 *Los Angeles Times* article in which writer Mary Curtius spoke of an attack that was carried out in retaliation for Israel's so-called “targeted killings” of Palestinian militants. It was also used in the same article within the following quote, “It just shows you how morally right we are in taking those preventive measures [targeted killings] to stop the terrorists,” said Sharon spokesman Raanan Gissin” (p. 1). An Oct. 4 Times article by Christopher Walker included this paragraph, “The decision, which ministers said would involve a return to the controversial policy of targeted killings, which are described by Arabs as legalized assassinations, could not have come at a worse time for Washington” (p. 1). In a July 21 New York Times article, Clyde Haberman included this use of the term, “Each day has brought some form of violence, with a crescendo this week of a Palestinian suicide bomb, target killings by the Israeli Army and a drive-by shooting by Israeli vigilantes” (p. 1).

Research Question 1, which asked were there any significant changes in the adjectives used to describe Arabs and Israelis and killings by them following Sept. 11, was not supported. The finding was significant ( $p=.001$ ). Twenty-eight negative terms were used to describe Arabs before the event, while 17 were used to describe them after.

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Although it might be assumed that more negative terms would have been used to describe Arabs after Sept. 11, there were actually more prior to the attacks. This finding might be explained by the push for media sensitivity following the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks. The Society of Professional Journalists released guidelines on how to prevent the racial profiling of Arabs.

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This case study was exploratory in nature and was designed to explore frames in U.S. and British coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict. The statistical analysis provided answers to the following questions: are the adjectives used by U.S. and British media to describe Arabs more negative than those used to describe Israelis? Are U.S. and British media more likely to include Israeli victim names than for Arab victim names? Does U.S. and British media coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict use harsh adjectives to describe killings by Arabs and soft adjectives to describe killings by Israelis.

It appears that both the U.S. and Britain used negative terms more frequently to describe Arabs than Israelis. This was interesting in that many articles asserted that the United States is an ally to Israelis, while Britain is an ally to Arabs. In fact, many articles depicted the United States as an ally to Israelis and Europe as an ally to Arabs. For example in an Aug. 5 *Independent* article, Robert Fisk states, "But the Americans – who call the West Bank "disputed" rather than "occupied" – are Israel's allies" (p. 19). In a *Wall Street Journal* Dec. 11 article, Bret alludes to European government being biased toward Israelis. The article states, "But the real answer is that European governments today, are by and large, tacit enemies of the state of Israel, much as they might protest that they merely take a more "evenhanded" approach to the Middle Eastern conflict" (p. A18).



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Geoff Winestock offers this comparison of Europe and U.S. policy in a Dec. 31 *Wall Street Journal* article, "Traditionally more sympathetic to Arab countries than is the U.S., the EU is less concerned about Iran's support for Palestinian radicals..." (p. A17). He offers a similar description in a Dec. 31 article, "The differences between the EU and the U.S. are most marked in policy on the Middle Eastern conflict, where the EU traditionally is less pro-Israeli than the U.S..." (p. A6).

This finding might be explained by the nature of the articles sampled. Many focused on suicide bombings and killings Arabs. Many took place in religious settings or places where civilians congregated such as restaurants. In addition, the adjectives used in this article may not have been a true measure of negativity. Future articles might explore the use of other adjectives that might better measure it.

The study did not show that U.S. and British media are more likely to include names for Israeli victims than for Arab victims. It appears that most victims were not named. Perhaps this is a newspaper routine in which only those names of victims from the home country are included. Future studies might look at this issue more closely to assess whether foreign stories contain names of victims.

Additionally, the study found that U.S. and British media did not use harsh adjectives to describe killings by Arabs and soft adjectives to describe killings by Israelis. However, percentages showed that "targeted killing" was used more frequently for Israeli perpetrators. Many articles that included the term focused on the conflict surrounding its use and if it was fair to use the term for killings by Israelis, which were just as brutal as killings by Arabs. The Society of Professional Journalists passed a resolution in October 2001, urging members and fellow journalists to take steps against racial profiling in their coverage of the conflict. The organization

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also asked journalists and to redouble their commitment to use language that is informative and not inflammatory; to portray Muslims, Arabs and Middle-Eastern and South Asian Americans in the richness of their diverse experiences; and to seek truth through a variety of voices and perspectives that help audiences understand the complexities of the terrorist attacks in Pennsylvania, New York City and Washington, D.C.

There were no significant changes in the adjectives used to describe Arabs and Israelis following Sept. 11. Although it might be assumed that more negative terms would have been used to describe Arabs after Sept. 11, there were actually more prior to the attacks. This finding might be explained by the push for media sensitivity following the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks.

### *Conclusion*

This case study looked at U.S. vs. British coverage of the Middle-Eastern conflict. Findings showed that Arabs were framed more negatively than Israelis. The adjectives used to describe members of this group were often more negative than those used to describe Israelis. Sept. 11 and country the article appeared in did not make a significance difference in how members of the groups were framed. In fact, there were more negative adjectives used to describe Arabs prior to Sept. 11 than after. This may be explained by a shift in the media's attention to the War in Afghanistan after Oct. 7, 2001.

### *Future Research*

The articles used for this study were from a purposive sample that does not allow for generalizations to be made to Middle-Eastern conflict coverage in general. Future research might include a larger body of newspapers. However, this research may provide a springboard for

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additional research into Arab-Israeli coverage by U.S. and British newspapers. It addresses some interesting issues and uncovers some key frames.

Because Arabs were framed more negatively in this case study, it would be of interest to assess whether the finding applies to a larger sample and to different types of newspapers. The newspapers used for this study were elite U.S. and British publications. They may be more careful in their coverage of all groups due to a higher level of professionalism.

In assessing the framing of Arabs, it might be of interest to look at the coverage of this group in other types of media such as newspapers in Israel and Palestine. On a more local level, it might be of interest to look at how other minority groups frame Arabs/Israeli. For example, a study on black press vs. general press coverage might offer some insight into differences in how minority group vs. majority groups frame conflicts. To assess the differences in U.S. and British newspapers, it would be of interest to look at how the two groups cover other conflicts. The War in Afghanistan provides the perfect backdrop for such a study. It would be of interest to look at how the two groups frame the conflict and what types of themes emerge.

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<sup>1</sup> On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four passenger jets and crashed two of them into the Twin Towers in New York and one into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Thousands of civilians died.

<sup>2</sup> Op-ed pieces, editorials and feature stories were excluded.

***The Role of Journalism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century National Movements in Estonia and Finland:  
Apples and Apples?***

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**Abstract:** This paper examines theories on the development of national identity as they relate to the role of the press in 19<sup>th</sup> century Estonia and Finland. This comparative approach not only illuminates the similarities and differences between these two cases, but also explores the interaction between actors involved in the press and as activists promoting national goals. In conclusion, the author finds the comparative approach and the theoretical models set forth by Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner and Miroslav Hroch to be useful for understanding the role of journalism in the so-called “national awakenings” of these two peoples, but calls for further research “from below” in order to more fully understand the complex relationship between media and changing identities.

## *Introduction*

By now, Benedict Anderson's idea of the "imagined community"<sup>1</sup> is ubiquitous. So often is it cited, that any scholar should writhe in the pain of redundancy and unoriginality before daring to bring the theory up again. Anderson's groundbreaking work is drawn upon in many fields, increasing its application and threatening the reduction of its title to a cliché. With that said, this paper nonetheless calls upon Dr. Anderson, as well as other theorists, in order to explore the role of the press in the formation of national identities and movements in Estonia and Finland.

Anderson's 1983 book is so conspicuous because it has much to offer, especially for the communications scholar. His ideas on the importance of the press and print-capitalism for bringing about a bonding simultaneity of thought and imagination between thousands of people appear to ring true in many cases and deserve exploration in others. At the very least, it is evident from Anderson's work and others that the press is often central to processes of national consciousness formation and nationalist movements.

The rise of the Estonian and Finnish language press corresponds with the solidification of national consciousness and cultural and political assertiveness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is therefore useful to explore the relationship between these two developments in these countries. A comparative approach such as this is also advantageous for several reasons. As Jay Blumler, Jack McLeod, and Karl Erik Rosengren have noted, this approach can broaden our understanding of communication patterns and enrich theory. Such research can also "overcome space- and time-bound limitations" and it can reveal

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<sup>1</sup> As put forth in: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1983)

“the consequences of differences...at a macrosocietal level.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore a study of this type should reveal something about the cases of Finland and Estonia, but it may also resonate more widely.

The choice of Estonia and Finland as cases was not random. Certain factors make them eminently comparable (apples and apples so to speak), but various differences in history and culture also make for some interesting divergences. The development of Estonian and Finnish journalism and national identity is a story of parallels and convergences, but also distinctive experiences.

Finland and Estonia are both northern European countries on the Baltic Sea. They are separated only by the narrow Gulf of Finland on which their current capitals of Helsinki and Tallinn face each other. Both had been taken over by foreign powers in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and remained so until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They speak related Finno-Ugric languages in a region surrounded by Indo-European speakers. Both were ruled by Sweden: Finland for about 600 years and Estonia for about 100. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century both were under the rule of Imperial Russia. A university was founded in Tartu, Estonia in 1632 and another in Turku, Finland in 1640. Estonians and Finns are mostly Lutheran and owing in part to the demands of this faith (the church demanded that all parishioners at least be able to read the catechisms) high literacy rates are found among these people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (around 90+ percent for both in the later 1800s). Importantly, for this study, the Finns and Estonians had “national awakenings” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that ultimately culminated in the establishment of independent states in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (declared in December 1917 and February 1918 respectively).

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<sup>2</sup> *Comparatively Speaking: Communication and Culture Across Space and Time*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992), pp. 3-4.

While in some ways the histories and cultures of Finland and Estonia seem to closely mirror each other, key differences existed (and exist) that impacted (and continue to impact) both national and press development. Estonians and Finns are different peoples with different cultures, different historical experiences, and mutually unintelligible languages. The non-indigenous elites of each country were different: Swedes in Finland and Germans in Estonia. The relationship of the Finnish Swedes and Baltic Germans to the local populations of their home cultures was also different.<sup>3</sup> In the Russian Empire, Finland was a grand duchy with autonomy surpassing the Baltic provinces of Estland and Livland where the Estonians resided. (Although these German-run provinces also maintained administrative systems apart from the Russian norm.) The Finns have also always been more numerous than the Estonians. Another crucial distinction is that the Finns were never forced to be serfs, while the Estonians only emerged from this bondage in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Differences such as these help account for interesting parallels, convergences, and divergences in the development of press and nation in Finland and Estonia.

### *The Press and Theories of Nations and Nationalism*

In 1983, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson published books that went far towards obliterating the notion of the nation as something organic and primordial.<sup>4</sup> These works are well known and only need to be briefly recapped here. Both saw the nation as a modern creation. Gellner stressed its industrial roots and the national necessity of cultural and educational homogenization. Anderson dwelled on how people far away from each

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<sup>3</sup> David Kirby. *The Baltic World, 1772-1993*. (London: Longman, 1995) p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press) and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

other and likely never to meet managed to see themselves as part of one super-family of a nation and how then these people would be so loyal to this imagined community as to be willing to die for it.

Both Gellner and Anderson saw language and communication as key to the rise of the nation, which became the prime means of social organization. For Gellner, it was important that communication be standardized in order for the myriad tasks of the modern economy to be undertaken. For Anderson, print and literacy were the keys to nation formation. Printed mass media was the great equalizer of language; it standardized language and gave new power to vernacular languages.<sup>5</sup> Most importantly, however, print media made the nation possible by providing the means to conceive of it. Anderson described how reading the newspaper enabled people to simultaneously imagine a national community of which they are a part.

Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident. Yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar.<sup>6</sup>

In this manner the reader is convinced of his or her place in a community that exists through the imagination rather than being observed. The simultaneity of the ritual adds to the feeling of participating in something whole and organic. The nation is something modern because the wide acceptance of such an abstract concept depends on the tools and practices of mass media.

Gellner's work leaves aside anything like a case study, and goes in-depth into the hypothetical example of the small nation of Ruritania in the empire of Megalomania. This

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<sup>5</sup> Anderson, p. 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

theoretical model is brilliant in many ways and it seems that Gellner had Eastern Europe in mind when he created it, but it is a framework into which any country can be plugged. Anderson's work is punctuated with many examples from around the globe, but likewise is concerned with building a grand theory for all nations. The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch has limited his inquiry of national identity and nationalism to small European nations, for whom he argues a special pattern of national development, exists.

Hroch is not as dedicated to the notion of the nation as tied to a historical epoch, indeed the word "revival" in the title of his book *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*<sup>7</sup> suggests that nations must come from something that predates the modern industrial era. Still, he does not directly contradict either Gellner's or Anderson's views on what ingredients make for national mobilization, he is only cautious with his handling of the idea of nation and nationalism as being distinct phenomena. For the small nations of Europe, Hroch has detected a pattern of development that leads to popular mobilization based on national goals. There are three phases in this periodization: Phase A is a period of scholarly interest in national culture; Phase B is a period of patriotic agitation; and Phase C is the rise of a mass movement.<sup>8</sup> In this paper we are concerned with Phases A and B primarily because these constitute the so-called "awakening" period in which national consciousness is formed.

### *The Development of the Finnish Press*

Following the Protestant Reformation, religious materials in Finnish began to be printed, while Swedish remained the language of high-culture and administration. Basic

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<sup>7</sup> (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp. 22-24.

literacy (reading) rates were also high due to the demands of religion, but until the 19<sup>th</sup> century upwardly mobile, educated Finns tended to adopt Swedish language and culture.

The first newspapers to circulate in Finland were issued by the Swedish government.<sup>9</sup> The first newspaper printed in Finland appeared on January 15, 1771. It was a Swedish-language paper titled *Tidningar Utgifne Af Et Sällskap i Åbo* (News Published by a Society in Åbo [Turku]). The society referred to in the title was called Aurora. It was an academic literary organization with a special interest in Finnish culture, folklore, and language. Professor Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739-1804) was instrumental in running both the society and the newspaper. Porthan was a contemporary of the German thinker Johann Gottfried Herder (who taught for a time in not-too-far-off Riga) and admired his ideas.<sup>10</sup> Herder believed that language was the unique expression of a people's values and that no linguistic-culture is superior to another. Subsequently, the pages of Porthan's *Tidningar* were more academic than news oriented, the Aurora Society having an interest in the uniqueness of Finnish culture. The publication of this paper corresponds with the beginning of Hroch's Phase A in national development, which is characterized by academic interest in national culture.

A sample issue of the first Finnish language paper also appeared in Turku in 1775. The following year, 23 issues were published before the publication went out of business. The newspaper was called *Suomenkieliset Tietosanomat* (Finnish Language Information-News). While basic reading skills existed among Finnish-speakers, money was lacking and dialectical differences between west and east Finland limited the

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<sup>9</sup> For a description see Bo Peterson. *Media, minds and Men: A History of media in Sweden* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksel, 1988) p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> Singleton, Fred. *A Short History of Finland*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 55; Wuorinen, John H. *Nationalism in Modern Finland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 23.

audience of the publication. It was not until 1820 that another Finnish language newspaper would be established.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the downfall of Swedish power. The eastern Baltic was ceded to Russia in 1721 by the Treaty of Nystad (Uusikaupunki in Estonian) and in 1809 Tsar Alexander I officially absorbed Finland upon the signing of the Treaty of Fredrikshamn (Hamina in Finnish). The Tsar preserved Finland's old Swedish laws and constitution and the territory continued to be a grand duchy (although with the Tsar as Grand Duke). Alexander I convened a Diet for the separate administration of Finland, although after meeting only once it was not reconvened until two Russian monarchs later in 1863.<sup>11</sup>

1809 was a watershed year in Finnish history. Historian Osma Jussika has described that year as the time that Finland reached a kind of internal statehood.<sup>12</sup> Because Russia annexed Finland that year, separated it from Sweden and granted it a new autonomy the event caused Finns to think about their national and territorial interests. While some of the Finnish aristocracy happily took up service in the Tsar's charge, others began to rethink the concept of Finland. The Finnish nationalist J.V.Snellman cited the importance of 1809 this way:

Before 1809 the world had not even heard of the Finnish nation. Even when the Swedish government bought peace with the surrender of Finland, there was no mention of it in the peace treaty, as we know. But even before the conclusion of peace, the Emperor Alexander had acknowledged the nationhood of the Finnish people and had declared that Finland would be included in the ranks of nations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> L.A. Puntila. *The Political History of Finland, 1809-1966*. (Helsinki: Otava, 1974) pp. 26-39.

<sup>12</sup> "Finland from Province to State" in Max Engman and David Kirby, eds. *Finland: People, Nation, State* (London: Hurst & Co., 1989) p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> David G. Kirby. *Finland and Russia, 1808-1920: From Autonomy to Independence, a Selection of Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1975) p. 47.

One such person, who began to rethink Finnish identity in this period, was a newspaperman named Adolf Iwar Arwidsson. He looked down on Russian culture and shuddered at the thought of life under the Tsar's two-headed eagle. In 1821 he started a Swedish language newspaper titled *Åbo Morgonblad* (Åbo Morning News). Through this short-lived paper he argued for education in Finnish and the use of Finnish as a unifying language for the nation. He attacked Finns who enriched themselves through service to the Tsar and his paper was banned within a year. Another Finnish language newspaper, *Turun Wiikko-Sanomat* (The Turku Weekly News), began in 1820 and struggled to publish fairly consistently for the next ten years.

An obstacle to Finnish language publishing at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dialectical variance and simple inexperience with writing in that language. Finnish newspapers grappled with these problems in the period of academic interest in Finnish culture that can be said to constitute the first phase of Finland's national "awakening." Other activities in this period included the publication of a standard Finnish grammar in 1818 by Janko Juteini. In 1828 a lectureship in Finnish language was created at Helsinki University (moved from Turku the previous year). In 1851 a professorship in Finnish was created (the only other modern language to have a chair at that time was Russian).

Folklorists and writers also contributed to the scholarly exploration of peasant Finnish culture, but virtually all of the nationally minded literati in Finland also worked in journalism. Most famous among them is Elias Lönnrot, in addition to contributing to the press, traveled throughout Karelia and compiled the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, first published in 1835. Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the Swedish-writing national poet of Finland worked for *Helsingfors Morgonblad* (Helsinki Morning Paper) as editor and chief

contributor.<sup>14</sup> Another Leading Swedish-Finnish poet, Zachris Topelius, spent 20 years as the editor of the Swedish language *Helsingfors Tidningar* (Helsinki News). During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Finnish language press was still young and struggling Lönnrot tried to fill the periodic lulls in vernacular journalism with his own work and often his own money.

Miroslav Hroch locates the onset of Phase B in Finland's national revival in the 1840s with the work of Johan Wilhelm Snellman. In 1842, Snellman started two newspapers: the Finnish language *Maamiehen Ystävä* (Farmer's Friend) and the Swedish language *Saima*. The Finnish paper was filled with practical information while the Swedish laid out an agenda for national revival. It stressed the adoption of Finnish language and Finnish language education and pushed a nationalist philosophy. It was shut down in 1846, but other like-minded publications soon took its place.

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were two printing presses in Finland and by 1860 there were 23 printing facilities.<sup>15</sup> In 1863, the Finnish Diet reconvened after the ascension of Tsar Alexander II. Snellman was elected to the governing body and that same year Finnish was given equal status with Swedish as a state language (as is the case today). By the 1870s, "the Finnish national movement already had a mass character."<sup>16</sup> In 1878, the number of Finnish-language titles finally outstripped Swedish titles and in 1890 more issues per week were published in Finnish than in Swedish. Also by 1890 Finland's basic literacy rates had stood at approximately 90 percent for 50 years.<sup>17</sup> By the time

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<sup>14</sup> George C. Schoolfield. "National Romanticism—A Golden age?" in George C. Schoolfield, ed. *A History of Finland's Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998) p. 302.

<sup>15</sup> Torsten Steinby. *In Quest of Freedom: Finland's Press, 1771-1971* (Helsinki, 1971), p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Hroch, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Raimo Salokangas. "From Political to National, Regional and Local" *Nordicom Review* 20/1 (November 1999)

Finland declared independence on December 6, 1917 about 100 Finnish language newspapers were in circulation.

### *The Development of the Estonian Press*

In Estonia, as in Finland, printing in the vernacular followed the Reformation. Martin Luther considered the printing industry “God’s highest and extremist act of grace, by which the business of the gospel is driven forward.”<sup>18</sup> Accordingly religious works began to appear in Estonian in an effort to bring the peasantry closer to God. Printing on the territory of what is now Estonia began in Tartu in 1631. This first printing shop became the printing house for the university and printed works mostly catering to the Baltic German nobility, but also published items in Estonian and Latvian.<sup>19</sup>

As in Finland, where the first newspaper was published in the language of the elite, the first newspaper in Estonia was in German (published in Tallinn). It was called *Ordinari Freytags Post-Zeitung* and it started in 1675. Before there were Estonian language newspapers, there were calendars, which were printed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were diverse in almanac-style content and carried articles and numerous subjects.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ideas of Herder gained some adherents in the Baltic provinces and a group of German liberal-minded Estophiles began to concern themselves with Estonian culture. The activities of these people may be seen as constituting the start of Hroch’s Phase A: scholarly interest. Out of this tradition came the first Estonian language newspaper in 1806, edited by the pastors Gustav Adolph Oldekop, Johann

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Alfred Burns. *The Power of the Printed Word*. (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> Mare Lott and Aile Moldre. *A Brief History of the Estonian Book*. (Tallinn: Estonian Librarians’ Association, 1993), p. 5; Friedrich Puksoo. “The Estonian Book During 400 Years” *Baltic Countries* 1/2 (December 1935): 235.

Philip von Roth and Carl August von Roth. Published in the university town of Tartu it was called *Tarto maa rahva Näddali-Leht* (Tartu Country Folk's Weekly Paper). This pre-serf emancipation paper was too much for authorities and was shut down a year later. (The Estonian serfs were freed in 1816 in the north and 1819 in the south.) It was not until 1820 that another Estonian language paper appeared, the same year the Finnish press sprang back to life. In that year Otto Wilhelm Masing started the unoriginally named *Marahwa Näddala-Leht* (Country Folk's Weekly Paper).

Although Masing considered himself a German,<sup>20</sup> he was of Estonian and Swedish origin, and was the first publisher with a thorough command of the Estonian language.<sup>21</sup> His paper, which was published from 1821-23 and briefly appeared again in 1825, was a landmark of Estonian language journalism, but was slightly ahead of its time. The paper had difficulty maintaining a readership and ultimately had to close due to the financial constraints of its peasant audience.

The real father of Estonian journalism, however, was Johann Woldemar Jannsen. In 1857, Jannsen started a paper called *Perno Postimees* (The Pärnu Postman).<sup>22</sup> On the first page of the first issue, Jannsen addressed his readers: "Terre, armas Eesti rahvas!" (Greetings, dear Estonian people!). He addressed his readers as Estonians, representing a nation rather than the previously used category of country folk denoting a peasant class. From this point on there was continuous Estonian-language journalism and a steady growth of national consciousness.

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<sup>20</sup> In Estonia, as in Finland, before the "national awakening" most upwardly mobile peasants adopted the language and culture of the ruling elites as they scaled the class ladder.

<sup>21</sup> George Kurman. *The Development of Written Estonian*. (Bloomington, Indiana University, 1968) p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> *Perno Postimees* moved to Tartu in 1886 and was renamed simply *Postimees*, Jannsen edited another paper from 1864-1880 named *Eesti Postimees*.

With *Eesti Postimees*, Jannsen also aided in the victory of the north Estonian dialect over the south and helped introduce a new standard orthography (based on a Finnish model). Nearly all the key figures of Estonia's national revival also participated in Jannsen's work at some point. Jannsen's daughter, Lydia Koidula, who went on to become Estonia's national poet, was a key supporter and contributor. Friedrich Kreutzwald, who compiled Estonia's national epic *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son, published in 1957), contributed articles in various papers including Jannsen's. Jakob Hurt also published in *Eesti Postimees* (he was denied permission to start his own paper). Hurt saw the Estonian nation in a Herder-like fashion. It was unique, organic, and on par with any other nation, but due to its small size he saw its mission as cultural rather than political.<sup>23</sup> Carl Robert Jakobson also was also a contributor to *Eesti Postimees* before starting his own paper in 1878.

Jakobson named his paper *Sakala* (the ancient name of a district around Viljandi) and described it as nationalist.<sup>24</sup> This type of patriotic agitation can be seen as ushering in Phase B in Hroch's scheme. Jackson called for Estonian political rights equal to those for Germans and offered the Finnish Diet as a model for administration. He argued against the Germanization of rural schools and called upon German pastors to relinquish their control over primary education. Jakobson moved beyond the cultural goals of Jannsen and Hurt and made a plea for political action based on national aims. Jakobson also rose to the leadership of the Society of Estonian Literati, an organization founded in the 1860s that was modeled on the Finnish Literary Society (founded in 1831) and was dedicated to

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<sup>23</sup> Toivo U. Raun. *Estonia and the Estonians*. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1991) p. 64.

<sup>24</sup> Raun. "The Role of Journalism in the Estonian National Awakening" in Aleksander Loit, ed. *National Movements in the Baltic Countries During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Stockholm: Centre for Baltic Studies, University of Stockholm, 1985), p. 395.

promoting Estonian language and literature, including journalistic enterprises.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, not surprisingly *Sakala* was shut down in 1882. However, newspaper publishing in Estonian continued unabated. By 1885 there were 21 journalistic titles (although less regular papers) with an overall circulation of at least 10,000 not counting pass-along readers.<sup>26</sup>

After 1905, the national goals of the papers and their readers became stronger and two months after Finland, Estonia declared independence on February 24, 1918.

### *Contact and Influence between the Estonian and Finnish Press*

In many ways the development of the Estonian press mirrors that of the Finnish, if lagging behind a bit. In both countries newspapers played a role in facilitating the emergence of modern national consciousness and most of the leaders of each national movement took part in the work of journalism. However, this is not a coincidence and besides similarities of geography, language, culture and politics actual contact and influence existed between them.

Much of this influence went from Finland to Estonia. Toivo Raun has written that Finland served as a model for social and political development for the Estonians and that this was reflected in an abundance of articles on Finnish affairs and culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Estonian press.<sup>27</sup> The early Finnish nation-building newspaperman Adolf Arwidsson even provided the prototype for what was to become standard Estonian orthography. In 1822, he argued in a widely read article that Estonian should be written

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<sup>25</sup> Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians*, p. 75. For a description of the life and work of Carl Jakobson see Ea Jansen and Juhan Peegel. *C.R. Jakobsoni "Sakala" ja Eesti Ajakirjandus Teed*. (Tallinn: Kirjastus Eesti Raamat, 1979)

<sup>26</sup> Raun. "The Role of Journalism in the Estonian National Awakening" p. 392.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 395.

on a Finnish model rather than a German one and 50 years later Estonian did indeed adopt the “Finnish orthography.”<sup>28</sup> Arwidsson also studied the Estonian language and translated Estonian poems into Finnish.

Carl Jakobson, the editor of the radical Estonian paper *Sakala* visited Finland in 1871 and 1876 and came back an enthusiastic supporter of cultural cooperation with Finland and using the Finns as a model for national development. “In their cultural labors, let the Finns and Estonians be as one people,” he said.<sup>29</sup> The idea was not unprecedented. In 1848 the Finnish writer August Ahlquist suggested merging Estonian and Finnish into one language to increase the number of Finnish-speakers.

Finland was viewed a useful model because the Finns had never been serfs, Finland already had autonomy, and a Diet that represented all classes in society. Jakobson’s enthusiasm for Finland even caused some Baltic Germans to accuse him of plotting an Estonian-Finnish political union.<sup>30</sup>

*Postimees’* editor Johann Jannsen also visited Finland and advocated close ties with Estonians’ cultural cousins to the north. But the relationship between Estonians and Finns was not only one of Estonians admiring their more numerous neighbors. Jannsen’s newspaper was known in Finland and Finnish notables such as the pioneering historian Yrjö Yrjö-Koskinen knew his work and visited him in Tartu. Johan Snellman, the most influential figure of the Finnish national awakening advocated the importation of

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<sup>28</sup> Kurman, George. *Literatures in Contact: Finland and Estonia*. (New York: Estonian Learned Society in America, 1972) p. 42.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> Hoyer, Svennik, Epp Lauk, and Peeter Vihalemm. *Towards a Civic Society: The Baltic Media’s Long Road to Freedom*. (Tartu: Baltic Association for Media Research, 1993), p. 77.

Estonian words into Finnish to get rid of some of the Swedisms that had crept in over the preceding hundreds of years.<sup>31</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Before the “national awakenings” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Finns and Estonians were peasants with little sense of belonging to a national whole. To be sure each people shared cultural traits, collectively inhabited specific geographical areas, and held a shared history, but the Finns and Estonians made no effort to collectively celebrate or assert their national identity for political or cultural means. It is clear that the advocates of nationhood in 19<sup>th</sup> century Finland and Estonia took the press seriously. National identity was pushed in the pages of the press; perhaps not a purely invented national community, but likely an imagined one in Anderson’s sense. As newspaper circulation grew along with national assertiveness it is easy to imagine all those people reading the newspaper simultaneously and imagining themselves as Finnish or Estonian. But other important changes were occurring at the same time in this region.

Populations were growing rapidly, despite bouts of crop failure and famine in both countries in the later half of the century. Finland’s population more than doubled to over two million. Smaller Estonia reached over 800,000 in 1897. Education had improved thanks to the campaigns in the first half of the century. Industrialization and urbanization had started affording new opportunities to Estonians and Finns and altering the skills necessary for survival. Gellner and others have argued that these factors contribute mightily to the formation of national identity.

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<sup>31</sup> Kurman, pp. 61, 118. Some Estonians such as Jakob Hurt also advocated using Finnish words to plug such perceived holes in Estonian.

It is clear that the development of the press in conjunction with the formation of national identity in Finland and Estonia followed similar paths, but with distinct variations. Most notably the Finns appear to have reached a higher level of national consciousness ahead of the Estonians. This is likely due to historical factors such as the fact that Finns were never enserfed, freeing their opportunities for education and mobility (social and physical) to some degree. Also of key importance was cooperation from the Swedish-speaking elite. While there were German liberals in Estonia, there was not a similar alliance between elites and peasants based on the goal of nation building.

It is appropriate to speak of newspapers as crucial to the process of national identity formation in Finland and Estonia. It is easy to imagine all those people imagining Anderson's imagined community, but what evidence do we have of how people really felt about their newspapers? Do we know that newspapers had some kind of special influence over people? It appears that Estonian and Finnish editors felt a good measure of confidence in the pens they wielded, but direct evidence is sparse. In Estonia editors had a habit of printing (as articles) and answering readers' letters. *Eesti Postimees* answered 272 such letters in 1865 and *Sakala* answered 716 in 1881.<sup>32</sup> Rising circulation figures also indicate rising popularity. It is also interesting that the more nationalist *Sakala* drew more readers than the more moderate *Postimees*. In the late 1870s and early 1880s. This may be both a sign of public sentiment and media influence for media is generally both a shaper and a mirror of society. Anderson's notion of the imagined community is useful, but this is not to say that the press is the only contributing factor to the rise of national consciousness in Finland or Estonia. The press went far towards creating standardized languages and called for cultural and political gains for the national group. But most its

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<sup>32</sup> Raun, p. 396.

most important trait was its mass character. This was new in Finland and Estonia. This facilitated the spread of ideas in ways previously impossible. As the only mass medium newspapers were uniquely positioned to provide the sense of imagined community that indeed occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Still, more research needs to be done in this area. Researchers must delve more deeply into the primary source material in Finland and Estonia. Letters are one place to start, but the records of key organizations such as the Finnish Literary Society, the Society of Estonian Literati, the newspapers themselves, as well as diaries and other sources should be consulted in order to gain a clearer picture of how people really used the press.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In fact, researchers at Tartu University are currently working on a multi-volume history of the Estonian press that should go far toward illuminating and answering some of the issues and questions raised in this paper.

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Intl

Covering the Dead: U.S. and Chinese Magazine Reportage of the Crackdown on  
the Tiananmen Square Movement

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### Abstract

Based within the historical context of the Tiananmen Square movement in Beijing 1989, the study first attempts to delineate journalists' narratives of the crackdown on the movement, and then to explain why they interpreted the event the way they did by putting the narratives into the different discursive contexts of what it means to be a journalist, which are constructed differently by U.S. and Chinese journalists as members of different interpretive communities. The study involves a textual analysis of 17 news articles from *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Xinhua Monthly*.

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## Covering the Dead: U.S. and Chinese Magazine Reportage of the Crackdown on the Tiananmen Square Movement

Tiananmen Square, the most emotionally and historically charged urban space in China, witnessed many impassioned events in the spring of 1989 (Spence, 1990). The death of Hu Yaobang, former General Secretary of the Communist Party, on April 15<sup>th</sup> triggered protests by students, who have historically been in the vanguard of China's political movements. Their initial requests included better treatment for intellectuals, an end of official corruption, political reform based on some of Hu's ideas, and respect for personal freedom (Hinton & Gordon, 1996). To bring more pressure on the government, students started a hunger strike May 13<sup>th</sup> that gained wide sympathy in Chinese society. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, over a million people from all walks of life staged the largest demonstration to date in support of students. In the face of the broader movement, on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the city government imposed martial law and summoned 200,000 soldiers to Beijing. The following 13 days saw students, intellectuals, and workers barricading tanks and troops from entering Beijing until the crackdown, which began the night of June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Armed troops of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police (PAP) advanced into the city all the way to Tiananmen Square, firing at those who blocked and attacked them. In the morning of June 4<sup>th</sup>, the army took over Tiananmen Square, bringing a violent ending to the movement (Hinton & Gordon, 1996).

As the movement unfolded, Chinese and international media presented their accounts of the event to the world audience. However, discrepancies are evident between domestic and foreign coverage. For instance, the death toll estimated by U.S. media ranged from 500 to 5,000, while Chinese media insisted that only 300 died, the majority soldiers. In retrospect, U.S. journalists

admitted to weaknesses in their reportage, including letting their sympathy divert their attention from facts, presenting overly optimist pictures of the protesters' chances of victory, and not explaining Chinese concept of democracy (Hertsgaard, 1989; Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, 1992). Journalist Amanda Bennett (1990) asked: "How could we have been so wrong" in covering the movement? Linda Jakobson (1990) found little guidance from Chinese media, since it changed tones as power shifted among Communist Party factions, and ended up reflecting a one-sided government version. China's retrospective critique of media performances, meanwhile, focused on criticizing those who had "undermined Party policies" and "misled the public" during the movement (Shao, 1989). Qian Liren, former director of *People's Daily*, and Tan Wenrui, former chief editor of the paper, were replaced after June 4<sup>th</sup>, since the paper had covered the uprising empathetically and reflected students' requests, an approach that did not win out (Tan, 1990).

In light of such marked differences in perspective, this study asks not who was right or wrong in covering the event of Tiananmen but rather why journalistic communities both in China and in the United States covered the event as they did. The study offers analysis of U.S. and Chinese reporting on the culmination of the demonstration--the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square movement, and especially accounts of those who died in the movement, in hope of delineating their master narratives of the ending episode. These narratives do not exist objectively but are projections of those who gave them meanings in discourse (de Certeau, 1978). They are used as an entry into understanding journalists as members of different interpretive communities.

### Journalists as Members of Interpretive Communities

Journalism has long been understood as a profession. However, conventional approach to studies of professionalism fails to attend to the informal networking that consolidates journalists into a community; nor does it answer such questions as why journalists tend to avoid professional trappings, and why and how they use professionalism as a way to conceal the constructed nature of their activities (Zelizer, 1993). Journalism as an interpretive community provides an alternative framework for understanding journalistic practices. As Zelizer (1993) theorizes, "journalists as an interpretive community are united through their collective interpretations of key public events. The shared discourse that they produce is thus the marker of how they see themselves as journalists" (p. 223). In other words, the shared discourse is constitutive to how they identify themselves (Barker, 1999) as journalists. Moreover, the shared past that is created upon continuous recycling of journalistic performances on key events is used as a standard for judging contemporary actions that in turn will ultimately contribute to the shared repertoire. For instance, coverage on Gulf War was judged against the experiences of reporting World War II and Vietnam (Zelizer, 1992). Since journalists create their own history and journalistic identity by deriving meanings of journalism from the coverage of key incidents and from years of journalistic experiences (Zelizer, 1993), it follows that journalists' practices can not only be evaluated against the shared discourse but also be understood within the context of it. Shared discourses provide guidance for current practices. For instance, reportage on the student movement 1989 initially was turned down by the chief editor of *People's Daily*, Tan Wenrui, since judged against his 39 years of experiences, these stories deviated from the Party line and from his standards of being a Party journalist (Jakobson, 1990).

Zelizer (1993) applied this framework to her study on the journalistic discourse around the Watergate incident, also earlier to JFK assassination coverage. The study reveals that journalists turned the discussion of the incident into a discourse about the journalistic practice of investigative reporting. The boundaries of investigative reporting were negotiated when reporters failed to meet the Watergate standards in Billygate (Broder, 1987) and Irangate (Baker, 1993). But through the discussion, being investigative has been crystallized as a crucial part of being a journalist. Similarly, stories on Gulf War provided a forum for journalists to discuss satellite technology and reporters' role in this new-tech era (Zelizer, 1992). When journalists felt that the authority of their expertise was threatened by the new technology, they used the archetypal figure Peter Arnett as a way to negotiate their mastery of the satellite-fed story. They defended the appropriateness of Arnett's action within the expanded boundaries of coverage offered by satellite-fed communiq  s. In other words, the discourse was translated into exploring whether it was necessary to adjust boundaries of appropriate coverage to suit the newest news-gathering technology.

Discourses as such accumulate into a collective history as journalists keep reflecting on their reporting of key events worldwide. They constantly redefine the meaning of being a journalist, which unites them into an interpretive community sharing the reference to their collective history. Therefore, a better way to understand journalists' practices is, in Foucault's words, to "historize" journalists' definitions of themselves. By this token, the study attempts first to delineate journalists' narratives of the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square movement, and then to explain why they interpreted the event the way they did by putting the narratives into the different discursive contexts of what it means to be a journalist, which are constructed differently by U.S. and Chinese journalists as members of different interpretive communities.

Prior Studies of Reporting on Tiananmen

A study of U.S. press coverage of the Tiananmen Square movement by the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy of Harvard University (1992), which traces and analyzes reports by key U.S. news organizations—including CNN, ABC, Time, the Associated Press, and the Washington Post—in great detail, reveals several problems in U.S. journalists' stories. First, since the conservatives in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) refused to talk to the press, U.S. journalists relied on the reformist faction for information, which led to the false optimism at one time that reformers and protestors might win the struggle. Second, much of the coverage overtly favored the protestors, which at times did violate journalistic standards of detachment, objectivity, and fairness. Third, many "parachute" journalists without adequate knowledge of the country did a poor job of shifting rumors and judging news, bringing significant lapses in factual accuracy. Finally, some coverage was at times parochial, producing a simplified view of democracy vs. communism, without explaining what democracy meant in Chinese society. The Barone Center study, together with other scholarly pieces and journalists' accounts (Black & Munro, 1993; Jin, 1999; Mills, 1991; Zhang, 1991), contributes useful observations about cultural and political values and historical legacies behind the news stories. However, they do not explicate how journalists internalize these values as the core of their occupational identity that directs their coverage in certain prescribed ways.

The same may be said for analyses of Chinese coverage of Tiananmen, Tan (1990), for instance, concludes that *People's Daily* played a rebellious role by not only covering the uprising but also conveying discontent and protest against the country's political authorities through all sorts of editorial techniques, including story selection and placement, page design, headline creation, and writing styles. However, the study fails to explain how the flagship paper of the

Party managed to deviate from the Party line. As Hood observes (1994), during the movement, the Chinese press was manipulated by hardliners and reformists alike as a weapon for factional struggle, and was never "free" in a real sense. Jakobson (1990) discloses how, as the movement developed, Chinese journalists bit by bit pushed the limits of their coverage. Starting from April 28th, stories about students' activities appeared in all major newspapers, TV and radio broadcasts. However, after the hardliners secured their power and issued martial law on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the press openness gradually came to an end. Media again took on the role of the party's mouthpiece. But these observers do not examine the long-term complex relationship between the Chinese press and the Party that has to a large extent shaped Chinese journalists' perceptions of themselves, and therefore cannot explain why the press, wittingly or not, submitted itself to the manipulation of Party factions even while calling for press freedom.

In summary, studies to date concentrate on evaluating U.S. or Chinese reports rather than on explaining why they constructed the same event into different narratives. The argument here is that different social, political, and cultural values, interpretive perspectives, and collective experiences have been crystallized into different discourses of journalism, which in turn shape journalistic practices and will continue to do so. The study tries to understand U.S. and Chinese journalists' narratives of the crackdown by attempting to characterize the differing discourses that have helped to define their respective journalistic communities, as exemplified in the one event.

### Methodology

In order to recover media narratives or discourses, this study involves a textual analysis of U.S. and Chinese reports of the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square movement. There are certain assumptions underlining the use of textual analysis as a tool to understand how journalists

perceive themselves and their jobs and hence perform according to their perceptions. First, media texts are discourses. They are socially constructed with meanings embedded in sounds, inscriptions, objects, and images (Barker, 1999). Second, media discourses are not only projections of those who constructed them (de Certeau, 1978), but also constitutive to their understanding of who they are. As Ree (1990) points out, people's perceptions of themselves are the accomplishments of storytelling. By using shared resources of history, language, and culture to construct discourses, journalists not only represent others but also represent themselves and hence "become" who they are (Hall, 1996). Shared discourses summon them to a shared subject position from where they speak as journalists. Similarly, Zelizer (1993) views journalists' shared discourses of both the event and themselves as the forces that unite journalists in a given context into an interpretive community.

With a discursive view of media texts, this study analyzes U.S. and Chinese journalists' accounts of the crackdown through an interpretive perspective. The analysis begins with the systematic interpretation of what journalists are up to or "think they are up to" (Geertz, 1973, p. 15), so as to sort out patterns or structures, aiming, as Geerts says, to "rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms" (p. 20).

To identify patterns of journalistic discourses of the crackdown, with a focus on accounts of death, the study asks the following questions: According to U.S. and Chinese accounts: (1) How many people died? (2) Who were they? (3) Under what circumstances were they killed? (4) Upon what kind of sources/evidence do the accounts rest? These four questions can help deconstruct the reports and grasp the gist of them, since in reporting the crackdown journalists had to base their stories on their answers to the same key questions. Finally, (5) What discrepancies, if any, exist between U.S. and Chinese reports, and between their reports and

other alternative records of the crackdown? This question compares and contrasts U.S. and Chinese journalists' stories, checking how different themes emerge from the two reporting groups and how each may differ from some alternative documents of the event. Answers to this question will provide additional insights for discussing why U.S. and Chinese journalists covered the crackdown as they did.

Stories of the crackdown are from three U.S. and Chinese newsmagazines: *Newsweek* and *Time* from the United States and *Xinhua Monthly* from China. There are several reasons for focusing on these magazines. First, as news digest magazines, *Newsweek* and *Time*, without pressure of daily deadline, have more opportunities to review the major events of the week. They summarize and integrate the daily newspaper and television reports into more coherent themes with in-depth exploration of news events and the grasp of a wider dimension of issues. Second, both *Newsweek* and *Time* have a wide scope of influence. Published since 1933, *Newsweek* is distributed to 190 countries with worldwide circulation of over 4 million and US circulation over 3.1 million. *Time*, published since 1923, has global circulation of almost 6 million and domestic circulation over 5 million ([worldpressgroup.com](http://worldpressgroup.com), 2002). Millions of Americans are absorbing ideas about life at home and abroad from these magazines. Finally, *Xinhua Monthly*, published since 1949, is a digest of major news events, Party documents, leader's speeches, and editorials of major Party newspapers such as *People's Daily* and *Beijing Daily*. It claims in its master head to "synthesize and document major press voices and party policies."

The study reviews coverage from June 3rd, the day when the crackdown started, to July 31st, by which time news reports of the event had subsided. Within this time frame, 17 news articles are analyzed, 4 from *Newsweek*, 5 from *Time*, and 8 from *Xinhua Monthly*. Articles from *Newsweek* and *Time* are usually 3 to 5 pages long. Each page usually includes 1 to 2 photographs

featuring blood, death, and clashes. The length of the articles from *Xinhua Monthly* ranges from 1 to 4 pages, dominated by texts.

Moreover, the study draws upon alternative records of the movement, against which themes of media reports are compared. The alternative sources are not used as "objective" accounts of what "really" happened for purpose of judging U.S. and Chinese reports, but rather as sources of additional perspective on the event that can highlight what journalists may have included or excluded.

#### Comparing News Articles and Alternative Records

How many died. The first point of conflict between U.S. and Chinese coverage is the death toll. In *Time* for June 12th, the death toll was estimated at 500 to 2,600, giving no specific figure for civilian/student or military casualties. In its June 19th issue, *Time* raised the death toll to 5,000 without attribution. *Newsweek* in its June 12th issue gave the number of 500 to 1,000 and described that "in the casualty room of one nearby hospital...blood was inches deep on the floor..." *Newsweek* did not clarify the identity of the dead either. On the other hand, *Xinhua Monthly* adopted the number from the government: "...more than 5,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians were wounded, and less than 300, including 23 college students, died during the riot."

An accurate assessment is impossible, since the Chinese government and the army did not want the number known and interfered with the evidence of the dead (Brook, 1992). Their interference makes the Chinese official/*Xinhua Monthly*'s death toll highly suspect. Based on his investigation in 13 hospitals near Tiananmen Square and interviews with medical personnel, Canadian author Timothy Brook suggests that at least 478 died. Given the fact that there were 32 hospitals and 124 medical facilities in Beijing, the final number may go far beyond his partial estimate. But is the number of 5,000 believable? This estimate becomes subject more and more

to doubt. Looking back, many U.S. journalists admitted to the research group of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press at Harvard University (1992) that since the Chinese government interfered with original evidences, it was hard for them to arrive at a reliable death toll. An exaggerated figure like 5,000 may well have rested upon the testimonies of the Chinese witnesses who were expressing outrage.

Who died and how. As to who died and under what circumstances they were killed, U.S. and Chinese press also presented sharply different pictures. U.S. news reports suggested a picture of good students and civilians against an evil government, while Chinese reports suggested a scene of the brave people's army quelling "a counter-revolutionary riot."

In the June 19th *Newsweek*, a special report commented that civilians were slaughtered and Deng Xiaoping, who believed in Mao Zedong's dictum that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," expressed no remorse. The June 19th issue also cited the testimony of Chinese witnesses. One of them reads: "One line of students would stand up and then get shot down and then another line of students would stand and the same thing would happen..." *Time* of the June 19th issue presented a stunning story with the following comment leading a group of photos of the dead and the wounded: "Thousands of combat troops stormed Tiananmen Square, transforming the Woodstock-like encampment of young students calling for democracy into the bloodiest killing ground in Communist China's history..." Although the two newsmagazines did not or could not give a specific number of student casualties, their reports indicated that students constituted the majority of those who were killed, and that all people who were against the army were honest, just, and innocent. The two magazines did mention deaths of soldiers but gave no contexts or details of their deaths, giving the impression perhaps that they deserved to die.

Alternative records of the crackdown revealed a much more complicated situation the night of the crackdown. First, rather than students, it seems civilians constituted the majority of the dead (Hinton & Gordon, 1996; Nathan & Link, 2001). Students in Brook's (1992) investigation confessed that none of their closest friends were shot. Few students could even name names. Journalists, eyewitnesses, and Chinese government internal documents (Black & Muron, 1993; Hinton & Gordon, 1996; Nathan & Link, 2001) confirmed that the student protestors remaining on Tiananmen Square—about 3,000 of them—were allowed to evacuate around 5:00 a.m. on June 4. Second, the U.S. press didn't disclose that real rioters were mixed among innocent people. According to Brook (1992) and the Barone Center report (1992), the rioters were mostly young men from rural areas. Without work permits in cities, they looked for employment on Beijing construction projects and slept under highway overpasses or outside the Beijing Railway Station. They belonged to, in government terms, the "floating population." Other rioters were members of jobless city gangs. They were out there during the crackdown to "have fun and make trouble" (Barone Center, 1992). In many cases, they started clashes with government troops by beating and killing soldiers and burning military vehicles. Omission of violent rioters in the U.S. coverage led to the further omission of the death of soldiers and of the complicated relationship between students and troops. According to BBC journalist John Simpson (as cited in Brook, 1992), in a clash, rioters killed two soldiers and wounded one without the three doing any harm to civilians:

the first victim was dead within seconds...A second soldier showed his head through the door and was then immediately pulled out by his hair and ears and the skin on his face. This soldier I could see: his eyes were rolling, and his mouth was open, and he was covered with blood where the skin had been ripped off. Only his eyes remained...but then someone was trying to get them as well, and someone began beating his skull until the skull came apart...I felt it was the crowd that was the animal, that it wasn't properly human. The soldier [the third victim] had sunk down to the ground, and a man was trying to break his skull with a half-brick, bringing it down with full force...A little room had been created

around the soldier, and the student who had tried to rescue him before could now get at him...the student was able to pull the soldier away and get him on to the bus by the other door. He was safe.

Similar incidents of students, civilians, or medical personnel rescuing soldiers were documented in Black and Muron (1993). Such scenes were excluded from the U.S. news.

*Xinhua Monthly*, on the other hand, highlighted the loss of government troops. It did not describe scenes of troops firing at civilians and students or even running over them with military vehicles. It denied that PLA and PAP committed most of the violence. In its June issue, *Xinhua Monthly* claimed that among the over 200 dead, about 100 were soldiers, and that over 568 vehicles were destroyed and burned by rioters. The "martial law enforcement troops" were said to have exercised great restraint along their march toward Tiananmen Square. They were not suppressing students and civilians but defending themselves against attacks from rioters. Thus during this process, onlookers and students were knocked down by vehicles or hit by stray bullets. In addition, *Xinhua Monthly* highlighted how enforcement troop soldiers were beaten, burned and lynched. These stories suggest that the army suffered more than citizens, and that the military operation, although it did cause casualties, was on a scale appropriate to the level of opposition the army had to face. Military actions—beatings, killings, crushing, and so forth—found justifications in these reports.

Hinton and Gordon (1996), Brook (1992), and Nathan and Link (2001) confirmed that the troops did display restraint whenever possible in the initial stage of their action. Many innocent soldiers were killed at this stage. However, they no longer restrained their actions after they received the order around 11:30 p.m. on June 3rd to proceed at any cost. After that the army was not shooting over people's heads or at the ground, but at chest level with live ammunition. The blood and the death of civilians and students were beyond doubt. Among the victims were

seniors, women, and children who certainly could not be labeled as rioters. And some "martyrs" such as Liu Guogeng did not die with clean hands. According to testimonies (Brook, 1992), Liu killed 4 people, including a child, before he was lynched.

Use of evidence. The third conflicting point between U.S. and Chinese coverage is in their choice of sources. *Newsweek* and *Time* relied heavily on foreign and Chinese witnesses. However, the Barone Center report (1992) found that witnesses' perceptions often were muddled by emotion, confusion, and darkness, and that some Chinese who were interviewed were expressing rage rather than telling the truth, resulting in exaggerations in U.S. reporting. For example, *Time*, in its June 12th issue, cited a protestor who reported that tanks fired their cannons indiscriminately. However, according to Black and Muron (1993) and Brook (1992), during the clashes, many tanks were set on fire and destroyed without explosion, which indicated that tanks were not carrying ammunition and their role was pure intimidation. *Newsweek* for June 12th quoted an anonymous Chinese intellectual saying that soldiers had shot a nurse in a hospital near the Square around midnight June 3rd when she was calling for a blood donation for wounded civilians and students. However, shooting first started around 10:30 p.m. Fuxing Hospital, the first hospital to receive casualties, treated the first wounded around 11:30 p.m. Therefore, Fuxing Hospital and many other hospitals that received casualties later couldn't have run out of their stored blood and called for a donation until several hours later. According to doctors' testimonies, hospitals' blood supplies were running out after 3 am June 4th. Hinton and Gordon (1996) also disproved some witnesses' stories of soldiers shooting hundreds of students under the Monument to the People's Heroes and burning human remains on the Square.

On the other hand, *Xinhua Monthly*, throughout its reporting, used only Chinese government sources and denounced other sources as rumormongers and U.S. reports as

fabrications. Two days after the crackdown, Zhang Gong, a military spokesman and also the director of a unit of the troops, claimed that between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m. June 4th troops on the Square did not shoot or run over any student and civilian. *Xinhua Monthly* stuck to this official account throughout its reports. In its June issue, it cited a spokesman of the Beijing Foreign Affairs Office, denouncing the Associated Press for distorting enforcement troop officer Li Zhiyun's words. In its June 16th news report, the Associated Press quoted Li Zhirun as saying: "some soldiers in our troops, especially those in the unit that has suffered casualties, fired toward the square." In brief, *Xinhua Monthly*'s stories rested solely on the one-sided version of the crackdown produced by the government, and avoided the question about what happened outside Tiananmen Square. Nathan and Link (2001) revealed that most deaths occurred as troops moved in from the western suburbs toward Tiananmen along Fuxingmen Boulevard at a location called Muxidi. Moreover, as Hinton and Gordon (1996) recorded, at the Liubukou intersection a tank ploughed into the tail end of a column of students who had just left the Square, reportedly killing seven students.

The above comparison and contrast of U.S. and Chinese news articles and alternative records highlight significant discrepancies between news narratives of the crackdown. The U.S. coverage and the Chinese accounts differ from each other as well as from later expanded efforts by scholars and journalists to recover the real picture of the night.

#### Why Do Journalists' Narratives of the Crackdown Differ?

Chinese and American journalists are two different interpretive communities. Operating in different cultural, political, and historical contexts, they have inscribed different social values and interpretive perspectives into their respective discourses of journalistic identity.

Chinese journalists, as a result of long-term ideological imburement and practices of serving political powers, define themselves largely in terms of political consciousness and alignment. This close tie between politics and journalism makes them a unique interpretive community quite different from U.S. journalists. As summarized by Su (1994), the CCP believes in the necessity of molding public opinions and controlling ideology in order to seize power, justify party policies, curb dissident and instability, and to keep socialism alive. Therefore, throughout the CCP history, techniques such as positive education, political criticism and self-criticism, and campaign in intellectual sphere have been used to foster the thinking the CCP desires.

Journalists, within this environment, are not only the educated but also the educating tool. The Party has established a variety of mechanisms to ensure that journalism acts as its "throat and tongue," a common Party phrase. Journalists are not only responsible for fostering national integration and mass indoctrination, but also, in Hood's words (1994), "abused" by the CCP as a bottom-up information gathering tool and a weapon in factional struggles. This is why Zao Ziyang, former General Secretary of the CCP, in order to push his reform agenda, strategically placed reform-minded personnel in key national and provincial media after he gained power within the party.

As a result of the long-term involvement with politics, as both the indoctrinated and the tool of indoctrinating, Chinese journalists have long inscribed their political involvement into the core of their definition of journalism. To be a journalist also means to politically position oneself. This explains why even after pure ideological control cracked and journalists started calling for press freedom, they still could not escape the manipulation by the reformist faction of the CCP during the movement. For several weeks, though they deviated from the headliners' party line, they could not break the habit of politically positioning themselves somewhere, in this

case with the reformist faction. In his interview with U.S. journalist Linda Jakobson (1991, p. 6), former *People's Daily* editor Jing Jun revealed Chinese journalists' deep involvement with the party politics: "When Chinese journalists demanded press freedom, they were not asking for independent newspapers or private radio stations...They were not even thinking of news organizations which could stand on their own feet economically or be independent of the party administratively. They simply wanted to do away with censorship."

The political consciousness of Chinese journalists also explains why they reported the crackdown according to the tone set by the conservative party leaders. May 20<sup>th</sup>, the CCP declared martial law which indicated that hardliners prevailed within the party (Nathan & Link, 2001), after which media gradually unified their reports to reflect the government version of events. They presented the crackdown as "brave enforcement troops, with the cooperation of civilians and students, quelling counter-revolutionary rioters." After a short period on leash from strict Party control and an even longer period of gradual reform and loosening of journalistic controls (Polumbaum, 1990), Chinese journalism repressed to being a compliant mouthpiece of the Party. This had a lot to do with the Party's regulatory power as displayed in its replacing of reform-minded journalists such as *People's Daily*'s Tan Wenrui and Qian Liren and its shutting down of reformist news organizations such as *World Economic Herald*. Additionally, from the perspective of Chinese journalists, with the brutality of the crackdown and the shock of military repression, political consciousness was impressed deeper into their understanding of journalism. This is why after the disillusionment of the socialist ideal and a brief taste of "press freedom," they still quickly aligned themselves with the Party line, since "they have learned that believing or least saying one believes in the official Party line is a way to stay out of trouble" (Jakobson,

1990, p. 14). In other words, they have learned that to survive as a journalist in China also means to politically position oneself correctly for the time.

If political consciousness is at the core of Chinese journalists' shared occupational discourse, commitment to established orders, values and national interests constitutes defining criteria for being journalists in the United States. As pointed out by Gans (1979), the emphasis of American coverage of international news focuses on what is "relevant to Americans or American interests; with the same themes and topics as domestic news; or when the topics are distinctive, with interpretation applying American values" (p. 37). In reporting China, U.S. journalists share a long history of oscillation between cycles of romanticism and cynicism (Farmer, 1990; Bennett, 1990) that parallels political relations between the two countries. When the Cold War was at its climax in 1950s and 1960s and China was still closed to the foreign press, U.S. media presented China as an evil communist regime. However, with Nixon's trip to China in 1972 and Sino-American rapprochement, China was beautified by American press in 1970s as a utopia of egalitarianism and commitment (Lee, 1990). These shifts are constructions to the extent that, as Farmer (1990) observes, they are more to do with what is happening in the United States than with "reality" in China. Kim's (2000) comparative analysis on US press coverage on Kwangju and Tiananmen Square movements reveals that in reporting a strikingly similar movement in South Korea 1979, the U.S. newspapers used positive symbols to represent the government and legitimized the government's crackdown on the student protest. In short, U.S. media tend to domesticate foreign news as a variation on American themes (Lee, 1990).

Such a habitual commitment to domestic values and the shared discourses on reporting China shaped U.S. journalists' narratives on the crackdown, which they presented as communist regime killing pro-democratic students and civilians. Gans (1979) contends that U.S. journalists

interpret their "facts" according to "enduring values" such as ethnocentrism, or the tendency to "judge other countries by the extent to which they live up to or imitate American practices and values," and "altruistic democracy," which "suggests quite explicitly that democracy is superior to dictatorship, and the more so if it follows American forms" (p. 42). Commitment to these two values explains why American journalists labeled the movement as pro-democratic without sufficiently probing what democracy means in China. Democracy defined by U.S. news organizations is closely related to a series of constitutional rights such as election, freedom of press, freedom of association, the right to consume, and so on. However, Chinese students and civilians, throughout the movement, were not aiming at overthrowing the communist regime and establishing political mechanisms replicating those in the United States. Instead, they were calling for political reforms within the system and under the existing government. When they put their requests for reform under the slogan of democracy, they were trying to define a new Chinese version of democracy. U.S. journalists' asserted values also help explain why U.S. journalists became so emotionally charged in covering Tiananmen that their emotions diverted their attention from certain inconvenient facts (Hertagaard, 1989).

In conclusion, groups of journalists are united by their shared discourses of key events and by their shared meaning of being journalists within a given culture. The concept of journalistic interpretive community helps explain why news narratives are constructed in certain ways, and how accounts from different journalistic traditions can differ so dramatically. Chinese account of the crackdown --government troops quelling counter-revolutionary rioters--reflected the importance of internalized political consciousness. U.S. accounts presented the same event as quelling people's democratic will because commitment to the established values and order is central to U.S. journalistic practices.

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**PERCEPTIONS OF BRAZILIAN  
JOURNALISTS ABOUT  
MEDIA ROLES AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Perceptions of Brazilian Journalists About Media Roles and Foreign Influences**

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This paper is based on a self-administered survey with 402 journalists working for 13 leading news organizations and personal interviews with renowned journalists of São Paulo- Brazil's main media hub. Findings indicate that respondents hold a pluralistic view regarding media roles. They believe they are influenced by the American model of journalism and dismissed the traditional French influence that pervaded Brazilian journalism in the past.

## Perceptions of Brazilian Journalists About Media Roles and Foreign Influences

Understanding how news is produced and reported to the audience requires a careful look at the forces that shape media content at different levels. One aspect in special--journalists' professional values and personal characteristics-- has helped to enlighten the process and, at the same time, revive the media sociology field, a specialty inspired by occupational sociology.

At this point, though, empirical research on journalists' professional values and personal characteristics has focused mainly on professionals located in developed countries. Little has been said about journalists working in developing countries that are still in search of their own definition of democracy, their media roles and their journalistic model. The study of journalists in developing countries involves the replication of hypotheses about influences on media content in different cultural settings. In this particular case, it also involves the examination of hypotheses that unveil the nature of journalism in a mixed cultural setting.

According to McLeod and Blumler (1987), the replication of hypotheses forces research to reconceptualize theories and transcend what they called "naive universalism"(p.279). For example, journalists' professional orientation should differ in varying conditions and produce different influences on media content. Not surprisingly, journalists' professional orientation should also echo cultural ambiguities found in developing societies.

French and American styles of journalism have had major influences in Brazilian newspapers at different points in time. This paper focuses on self-perceptions of a sample of Brazilian journalists on media roles and their identification with the American and the French styles of journalism. It also briefly examines the process of absorption of professional norms

and values from developed nations (United States and France) by this sample of Brazilian journalists and explores how this body of influences is transformed and integrated into a particular cultural context. Finally, it looks at differences in self-perceptions between print and television journalists.

Brazilians cope with a great number of social and economic disparities. The country fits the description of Latin America as a region located "halfway between accelerated underdevelopment and compulsive modernization" (Martin-Barbero, 1988). Reinforcing Barbero's view is the existence of a contemporary, sophisticated print media read by the country's elite and ignored by the country's millions of illiterate citizens.

Thus, one expects to find in Brazil signs of a modern press operating in an underdeveloped environment. It is in this scenario, amid so many social contrasts, that Brazilian journalists practice their craft. It may be that these journalists have their value system defined mostly by the local social-political environment, while at the same time they perceive themselves as sharing similar self-images and news values with journalists from other cultures in developing nations. This phenomenon appears to happen among journalists in some developed countries to varying degrees. It might also be the case of journalists in a developing country such as Brazil.

#### The Brazilian Context

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world after Russia, Canada, China and the United States. It is the only Portuguese-speaking nation in Latin America, with a population of about 174 million people, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (<http://www.ibge.gov.br>, March 2002). Almost 80 percent of the population lives in urban areas near the coast. Apart from high levels of crime and unemployment, Brazil is plagued by

illiteracy. According to the 2000 Census, 13.63% of the population over 15 years old are illiterate. Neighbor countries such as Chile (4%) and Argentina (3%) have much lower levels of illiteracy for the same age group. São Paulo, the country's main financial and business center as well as the media's main hub, is the world's third largest megalopolis with a population of 16.6 million, according to the São Paulo Metropolitan Company of Planning (<http://www.emplasa.sp.gov.br>, September 1999). This study took place in São Paulo.

Brazil's diverse ethnic make up include descendants from Portuguese settlers, Africans and native Brazilians who have intermarried over the years. Other Europeans, Asians and Middle Eastern immigrants later joined them. Social and economic disparities prevail in Brazil. Income is highly stratified by class and region, and social mobility is low. The average income for the richest 10 percent of the Brazilian population is about 30 times more than the average for the country's poorest 40 percent. The distribution of wealth is stratified by class and region.

The country has one of the largest and best-developed press systems in all Latin America. There are about 300 newspapers in Brazil. Only four dailies, however, have the circulation and national clout to significantly influence national opinion and politics. They are *O Estado de S. Paulo*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Globo*, the last two located in Rio de Janeiro. The country's elite and the middle class read these newspapers, while most of the population gets its news from television and radio. In addition, a few weekly newsmagazines such as *Veja* and especially the influential television network *Globo* play a significant role in national politics.

In the past twelve years, the Brazilian media have enjoyed thorough press freedom because of the country's democratization. Such an environment presents an excellent opportunity to examine journalism as an occupation in a fresh democratic society.

Democratization and press freedom have initiated a national debate about the journalists' role in Brazilian society after 22 years of military dictatorship (1964-1986). Such a debate has been systematically covered by websites dedicated to media criticism such as *Observatório da Imprensa* (<http://www2.uol.com.br/observatorio>), as well as by the National Federation of Journalists (<http://www.fenaj.org.br>), by *Imprensa*, a media review published monthly and by ombudsmen columns at daily newspapers such as *Folha de S. Paulo*.

The controversy about the journalists' role escalated after a series of political events that began with a popular national campaign for direct elections in 1984 that was embraced by the media. It continued with the media accusations of corruption and clientelism against President Jose Sarney, who ended his term in 1989, and had its apex after the media played a powerful part in the impeachment of former President Collor de Mello for his participation in a corruption ring in 1992 (Amaral and Guimarães, 1994).

The Collor scandal gave the media an opportunity to try their own agenda. First, professionals and their news organizations' managers joined forces to send the state a message, that is, the media were ready to act as a real watchdog of government. Second, the belligerent coverage carried on by the print media was a successful marketing strategy boosting circulation and advertising sales. Finally, the media reaffirmed the return of press freedom by confronting the state in a democratic environment free from government censorship, confiscation, harassment or prosecution.

Apparently, the new democratic environment intoxicated news organizations. According to Brazilian researchers, the media turned into a new political force in the country and adopted an adversarial role by denouncing everything and everybody to a point where they may have

caused Brazilians to lose faith in most institutions in the country (Amaral and Guimarães, 1994; Marques de Melo, 1995). Signs of media dissatisfaction were everywhere.

Major flaws in the profession were noted by journalists from *Folha de S. Paulo*, a major daily newspaper that conducts public discussions about its norms through the ombudsman's column and seminars:

"Today's journalism is based on investigations sometimes inaccurate about wrongdoings in the public administration. Stories are told in authoritative, sometimes bombastic form. The impeachment....revitalized the political-institutional function of journalism and revealed flaws due to the increase of the media's influence. As the critical perception of the media toward the institutional and public powers has grown, so has grown the criticism toward the media. The hostility toward the media consists of three charges: the media is superficial, aggressive and pessimistic." Dudi Maia Rosa and Carlos Fajardo, "Projeto Editorial 1997," ([www.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil/fc170805.htm](http://www.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil/fc170805.htm) August 17<sup>th</sup> 1997).

A national poll conducted by the Institute Vox Populi in November of 1997 with 790 people around the country reported that 65% of the respondents thought the main role of the media was to report the facts objectively, avoiding bias. Subjects pointed out four main problems within the media. About 57 percent said the media made accusations without evidence; 41 percent said the media violated people's privacy; 36 percent said the media neglected important information in the stories; and 35 percent accused the media of favoring issues according to the news organizations' own interests.

Also, the respondents ranked their degree of distrust regarding professional categories. Forty percent said they mistrusted journalists, along with judges, and 42 percent said they mistrusted media owners. The degree of suspicion toward journalists and media owners was superseded by the respondents' distrust of Congress representatives (92 percent), state secretaries (88 percent) and business owners (51 percent) (Antunes, 1997).

The media's mood has alternated between short periods of optimism and long periods of skepticism since the consolidation of the democratic transition conducted by current President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, elected in 1994 and reelected in 1998. Cardoso, a distinguished sociologist who embraced professional politics, said in 1997 that Brazilian newspapers were prisoners of their own headlines. Asked in an interview to evaluate the press performance under democracy, he answered:

"Newspapers' opinions change frequently. Therefore, they misguide the reader. When I read about an issue on a paper, I check the competition for confirmation. It is like watching fireworks all the time. This permanent flickering of half-truths, of subjective perceptions of reporters, editors and sources, help to sell newspapers. Everybody plants fake stories. When I read the newspaper, I know who planted what. The planters of fake information end up believing each other... Does that inform the public?" (*Folha de S. Paulo*, March 9<sup>th</sup> 1997, <http://www.uol.com.br/fsp/mais/fs090304.htm>).

Because Brazilian journalism operates under such an ambiguous framework, somewhat compatible with the country's ambivalent democracy, Brazil makes an extraordinary case study in the context of cross-cultural and comparative studies of journalists.

#### Brazilians journalists' value system

Brazilian journalists' value system appears to be formed by three distinct but related sources: the newsroom routines and organizational constraints shared by these professionals; the foreign influences on local journalistic patterns; and specific historical conditions and contextual variables such as the route taken by democratic consolidation. The interplay of these three sources pervades journalists' self-perceptions of their profession and helps them to define who they are and what they do.

A combination of Brazil's indigenous culture with European and American influences has shaped journalists' professional orientation (Lins da Silva, 1991). Latin American newspaper editors have had access to European and American journalistic standards at different

points in the evolution of newspaper development in the region. This access has been facilitated by the nation's linkages to Europe and the United States to varying degrees (Pierce and Kent, 1985).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Brazil's main source of cultural inspiration became France and its liberal ideals. French cultural missions visited the country attending invitations by the Portuguese royal family established in the colony. French immigrants controlled all kinds of businesses, including major newspapers, while the elite sent its children to French schools (Sodré, 1976; Bahia, 1990). By then, getting an education meant acquiring a diploma--a distinguishing title--and a literary and abstract knowledge transmitted through commentary and speculation (Sodré, 1976). At the end of the 19th century, Brazilians experienced major changes with the end of the monarchy and of slavery and the beginning of the Republic. In the same period, the government stimulated European immigration while the newspapers sent their first foreign correspondents to Europe.

The first signs of American influence in Brazil and on Brazilian newspapers appeared in the 1920s, after economic and political interests held by the United States replaced traditional European interests such as the German, the British and the Dutch at the end of the First World War. The proximity between Brazilians and Americans translated into a strong economic and cultural move by the latter. After the 1940s, Brazilians became more familiar with American film, music and literature. The flow of Brazilian journalists and writers to the United States increased in the 1940s when Nelson Rockefeller, then director of the office of the Coordinator of Interamerican Affairs, sponsored excursions of Brazilian journalists to the United States (Lins da Silva, 1991). Many of these journalists sought the application of elements of the American style to Brazilian papers.

In recent years, Brazilian journalists appeared to be more integrated into a global culture of journalistic practices, following growing globalization trends encouraged by the American press model. Therefore, foreign journalistic practices, especially the American model, have had a pervasive influence in Brazilian newsrooms and, ultimately, have affected news selection and decision-making processes in a possibly conflicting way while intertwining with Brazilian values.

#### Theoretical Approach

The theoretical basis for this project comes from the perspective of occupational sociology. As Hirsh (1980) explained, occupational sociology in mass media focuses on roles and careers, the interaction of organizations and the individuals working for them as well as the routines and newsroom constraints faced by mass media workers.

Occupational sociology in mass media turned into a track termed "media sociology" and was launched by two classic studies done in the 1950s in the United States: the gatekeeping study by David White and the social control study by Warren Breed (White, 1950; Breed, 1955). Since these classic studies of the 1950s, American research has focused mainly on a micro-level sphere by describing how individuals within a social and occupational setting construct news. Conversely, European research has focused on ideological and institutional analysis by tackling questions involving the power exerted by various social institutions and structures and the entire society itself.

American research has been associated with a liberal-pluralist approach and is heavily grounded in empirical data. European research has taken critical, cultural and Marxist approaches to studying how social forces shape the news. Researchers in the two traditions examined the media in different contexts with divergent theoretical preoccupations and different

research methods that stemmed from cultural and historical differences between the United States and Western European societies (Reese, Ballinger and Shoemaker, 1993; Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott, 1982).

In Latin America, scholars have usually followed European research trends for three major reasons. First, the region's Iberian and Hispanic cultural heritages, followed later by English and French influences, affected social science's practices. Second, Latin America's history of class relationships, political movements, poverty and economic instability have strongly influenced the region's communication scholarship and match the conditions of critical, cultural and Marxist approaches. Third, media-government relations in Latin America have taken a distinct path from that of the United States because of cultural, economic and historic reasons (Marques de Melo, 1988; Martin-Barbero, 1988; Chaffee, Gomez-Palacio and Rogers, 1990).

In sum, the American liberal-pluralist tradition sees society as a complex of equivalent competing groups and interests. Media organizations are perceived as autonomous enterprises in which journalists enjoy great autonomy free from the state, political parties and institutional pressures. European critical, cultural and Marxist traditions see society dominated by an elite. Media organizations are perceived as part of the ideological arena that rules society. Journalists have the illusion of autonomy, but in fact they internalize the norms of the dominant culture and reproduce them at work (Gurevitch, 1982, p.1-3)

At one time, the two competing perspectives seemed irreconcilable. More recently, the liberal-pluralist and the critical, cultural and Marxist perspectives have moved to a new path in which they form a diverse coalition of intellectual positions that can complement each other. Both American and European researchers have emphasized the interdependency of their

approaches and managed to live in happy contradiction (Carey, 1997). It became clear that the study of the forces shaping the news requires levels of analysis that are interrelated. Hirsh (1980) proposed the study of three interdependent levels that he called models: occupational, organizational and institutional. Hirsh's argument was that individual in roles and occupational careers could not be divorced from organizational contexts, from technologies and markets, or from the surrounding political and cultural values of their societies.

This study hopes to offer a minor step toward a conceptual integration in the field. The unit of analysis here is the individual--the journalist--through a self-administered survey of Brazilian journalists working at major news organizations in São Paulo, followed by long personal interviews with renowned journalists. However, results of individuals' self-perceptions and personal interviews are offered in the light of elements of other levels of analysis such as the political economy of news organizations (ownership and control), and the interaction of news organizations with the social-political environment. These aspects were tackled in the brief history of media development in Brazil and were explicitly mentioned by journalists in the survey's open-ended questions and at personal interviews as factors that affect journalists' views.

### Method

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. A self-administered survey was distributed to about 1,000 full-time journalists working at five daily newspapers (*O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S. Paulo, Jornal da Tarde, Gazeta Mercantil* and *DCI*), two news weekly magazines (*Veja* and *Isto É*), a bimonthly magazine (*Exame*), a monthly magazine (*Imprensa*), three TV stations (*Globo, Cultura* and *Bandeirantes*) and two news agencies (*Agência Estado* and *Agência Folha*) of São Paulo, Brazil, in May of 1998. The population

sampled was obtained from an updated list owned by the local association of public relations agencies containing the names and the job titles of all full-time journalists working for all news organizations in São Paulo.

News organizations were selected based on their prominence. The news organizations selected for the study have national recognition, serve as role models to other media in Brazil, are more likely to produce serious, dependable journalism, have large circulation or audience, and are technologically updated. Furthermore, management at these news organizations was expected to cooperate with the survey and journalists were expected to be somewhat familiar with survey questionnaires. American techniques designed to improve response rates such as Dilman's method did not work with Brazilian subjects as anticipated. Personal contacts and networking were more efficient in prompting collaboration and generating trust than formal letters and follow-up cards. Nonetheless, the fact than an American institution—the University of Florida—sponsored the study immediately opened the doors at most news organizations.

The questionnaire partially replicated Weaver and Wilhoit's 1982 and 1992 surveys with American journalists, published in 1986 and in 1996 regarding the section on media roles and other sections not discussed in this paper. It included questions that explored journalists' self-perceptions regarding their identification with the American and the French styles of journalism. The questionnaire was refined after a pretest with Brazilian foreign correspondents and stringers based in the United States.

### Results

The questionnaire had a response rate of 40%, which is considered satisfactory for Brazilian standards. A similar survey conducted in 1994 by Brazilian sociologist Adalberto Cardoso with journalists from different regions got a response rate of 32%. Of the 402 subjects

who returned the questionnaire, 57.5% were males and 42.5% were females. About 55% worked for daily newspapers, 19.4% worked for TV stations, 18.8% worked for newsmagazines and 6.3% worked for news agencies.

The typical Brazilian journalist working for the leading news organizations in São Paulo-- the country's main media hub-- tended to be a young white middle-class male, politically left-leaning oriented, more likely to be married and Catholic. More than 80% of them were college graduates who majored in journalism. Having a degree in mass communication is more than an academic option in Brazil; it is a legal requirement for journalists, who also need to register their diploma at the Ministry of Education since 1969 in order to be hired by any news organization. Television is the medium that concentrates the highest percentage of journalism graduates, with more than half of them under 45 years.

In fact, journalism is a profession that attracts young people in Brazil. More than two-thirds of the respondents were between 25 and 44 years old, with female journalists being younger than male journalists. The mean age for females was 34 with a mean of 11.3 years of experience as a full time journalist, while the mean age for males was 38 with a mean of 15.2 years of experience as a full time journalist. Females, perhaps because they were younger, were more likely to be single than married. Minorities were under-represented in the sample, as they tend to be in most professions in Brazil. Only 2.2% of the respondents classified themselves as African Brazilians and only 1.2% as Native Brazilians. However, about 16% of the respondents classified themselves as having mixed ancestry. While most Brazilians tend to come from a mixed racial background and form a racial landscape that includes all colors, especially browns and tans, they hardly recognize themselves in terms of racial background.

While journalists are required by law to have a degree in communication to enter the field, very few continued their education beyond that. They said they would like to attend more workshops and complained that their news organizations did not allow them free time to pursue further training or education. Some news organizations do promote workshops and offer their employees English courses. About 75% of the respondents said they were fluent in English, which in reality means they are more likely to read in English than to speak, and 45.3% said they were fluent in Spanish. Both languages are perceived as essential tools in the field.

The three foreign publications most read by respondents were the *New York Times* (48.8%), *Newsweek* (38.3%), and *Time* (38.3%), followed by British publications such as *The Economist*, read by 33.3% of the respondents and *The Financial Times*, read by 24.4%. *Le Monde* was the only French publication read by a significant number of respondents, along with the Spanish newspaper *El País* and *Clarín* of Argentina. All three were read by 22% of respondents. CNN, which is constantly monitored in newsrooms, was watched by almost 80% of the respondents, followed by CBS (26.9%), and by BBC, along with other European public channels (22.1%)

Like journalists in other countries, respondents were not supportive of professional associations. Membership in these associations was low. Even the union, which defended journalists' rights during the military rule, has lost hundreds of members after membership became voluntary with the redemocratization process. At the time of this survey, 43% said they belonged to a union. These journalists tended to be more than 40 years old and had at least 15 years of professional experience.

In spite of distancing themselves from the union--traditionally a left-leaning organization-- Brazilians placed themselves at the left of the center (62.1%). Only 11% of the

sample placed themselves to the right of center. Being at the left of the center is a long tradition among Brazilian journalists. In the past decades, journalism suffered the effects of a right-wing military rule that included censorship in the newsrooms and political persecution. Journalists, therefore, perceive their alignment towards the left of the political spectrum as a logical choice.

The majority of the respondents had no affinities with political parties. This finding was a major surprise compared to a survey conducted in 1994 (Herscovitz & Cardoso, 1998), when 30% of the journalists supported the left-leaning Worker's Party. The decreasing support for the Worker's Party by journalists parallels the population's indifference toward politics in Brazil. While the country's democratization process progresses, major continuities from the old order persist. Political parties are still weak, politicians lack credibility, and the state bureaucracy retains a tremendous power over most aspects of social life.

According to Brazilian economist Roberto Campos, the government and the state are two different things in Brazil, and they tend to run over each other, creating a barrier to social development. Such a discrepancy started with the birth of the republican era in 1889. In the past 110 years Brazilians have faced a chain of institutional crises followed by either authoritarian or oligarchical regimes with brief periods of precarious lawful periods. The price to be paid for so many mistakes is high, according to Campos. "Brazil has entered the new millennium facing a deep social and moral crisis that includes the collapsing of social and political institutions, the absence of national values and symbols, the public opinion's frustration and loss of hope" (Campos, *Folha de S. Paulo*, <http://www.uol.com/fsp/brasil, 7/11/99>).

### Media Roles

The questionnaire replicated Weaver and Wilhoit's inquiry on journalistic roles. Journalists were asked to rate the importance of the following eight "things the media do" (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996, p. 135): getting information quickly to the public, concentrating on news which is of interest to the widest public, providing entertainment, providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems, investigating claims and statements made by the government, developing intellectual and cultural interests of the public, being an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions, and avoiding stories with unverified content.

Table 1.1 indicates that respondents considered investigating government claims (65.7%), also known as the "watchdog role," as the most important of all "the things the media do," followed by getting information to the public quickly (63.7%). Providing analysis of complex problems and developing intellectual/cultural interests were also roles considered extremely important by respondents. About one-third of the respondents considered avoiding stories with unverified content as extremely important. Only 21.6% considered it extremely important to concentrate on the widest audience. Serving as an adversary of government was rated as extremely important by 22.4% of the respondents. The adversarial role had the highest percentage of respondents saying it was not important: 17.2.

Brazilians' perceptions of some media roles had changed significantly in 1998 compared to a similar survey conducted in 1994, two years after the impeachment of President Collor de Mello (Herscovitz & Cardoso, 1998, p. 425). Brazilians' support for serving as an adversary of government decreased drastically from 55% in 1994 to 22.4% in 1998. So did support for providing entertainment, which decreased from 30% to 16.2%, as well as concentrating on the

widest audience, which went from 30% to 21.6%. This study confirmed the same trend verified in 1994, that is, Brazilians are more likely to support a combination of statements related to interpretive and disseminator roles.

Table 1.1      Importance Journalists Assigned to Media Roles      N= 402

Roles	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Investigate government claims	65.7	29.4	4.5	.5
Get information to public quickly	63.7	32.8	3.5	-
Provide analysis of complex problems	59.7	33.1	7.2	-
Develop intellectual/cultural interests	46.5	37.1	15.2	1.2
Avoid stories with unverified content	33.3	29.6	26.9	10.2
Serve as adversary of government	22.4	26.6	33.8	17.2
Concentrate on widest audience	21.6	39.3	32.6	6.5
Provide entertainment	16.2	39.6	40.3	4.0

A comparison of the importance assigned to media roles by Brazilian, American, and French journalists, presented in Table 1.2, indicates similarities among the three groups. Data on the French journalists come from the study conducted by Aralynn Ann McMane in her 1989 doctoral dissertation for Indiana University.

The three main media roles classified by Brazilians as extremely important were investigating government claims (65.7%), getting information to the public quickly (63.7%), and providing analysis of complex problems (59.7%). Americans selected getting information to the public quickly (69%), investigating government claims (67%), and avoiding stories with unverified content (49%).

The French journalists chose avoiding stories with unverified content (73%), getting information quickly to the public (69%), investigating government claims and providing

analysis of complex problems (both with 40%). The three groups agreed on the importance of investigating government claims, which is the traditional "watchdog role," and getting information to the public quickly as major media roles, which suggests that Brazilians, Americans, and French subscribe to a combination of interpretive and disseminator roles. Brazilian, American, and French journalists rated serving as an adversary of government in sixth place with very similar percentages: 22.4%, 21%, and 17%, respectively. The media role providing entertainment was perceived by the three groups as the least important.

**Table 1.2      Importance Assigned to Media Roles by Brazilians, American and French Journalists --Percentage Saying Extremely Important**

Media Roles	Brazilian N= 402 1998	American N= 1,156 1992	French N= 484 1989
Investigate government claims	65.7 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	67 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	40 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Get information to public quickly	63.7 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	69 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	69 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Provide analysis of complex problems	59.7 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	48 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	40 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Develop intellectual/cultural interests	46.5 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	24 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	29 (4 <sup>th</sup> )
Avoid stories with unverified content	33.3 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	49 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	73 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Serve as adversary of government	22.4 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	21 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	17 (6 <sup>th</sup> )
Concentrate on widest audience	21.6 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	20 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	28 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
Provide entertainment	16.2 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	14 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	8 (7 <sup>th</sup> )

These results, however, should be viewed with caution since the Brazilian sample was taken six years later than the American sample and nine years later than the French was. Yet they do offer some latitude to examine the relationships of Brazilian, American and French role statements. Answers to the battery of questions on media roles were aggregated into attitudinal clusters through factor analysis in order to locate clusters of common elements. In Weaver and Wilhoit's 1982 and 1992 surveys, factor analysis resulted in three main media roles named interpretive/investigative, disseminator and adversary. In 1992, the American study added a fourth role named populist mobilizer, which was not included in the Brazilian survey.

According to the latest Weaver and Wilhoit's study (1996), the interpretive/investigative role "remained the larger perception of American journalists" (p.137). This role combined investigating government claims, analyzing and interpreting complex problems, and discussing public policies in a timely way. It was supported by 62.9% of the American journalists. The disseminator role, which combined getting information quickly to the public and avoiding stories with unverified content, was supported by 51.1% of the American journalists. The adversary role, supported by 17.6% of the American sample, consisted of serving as an adversary of government and of business.

As in Weaver and Wilhoit's statistical analysis, this study employed a factor analysis procedure with principal component analysis with Varimax rotation and 1.00 in the diagonals of the correlation matrix. The three clusters that emerged explained 52.7% of the common variance and consisted of a different combination of variables than that of the American clusters. Table 1.3 presents the factor loadings on media roles distributed in three clusters (interpretive, disseminator, and adversary) and the Cronbach's alphas, a measure of inter-item reliability for the clusters.

Table 1.3 Factor Loading on Media Roles

Media Role	Factor 1 (Interpretive)	Factor 2 (Adversary)	Factor 3 (Disseminator)
Get information to the public quickly	-	-	.773
Provide analysis of complex problems	.680	-	-
Provide entertainment	.656	-	-
Investigate government claims	.665	-	-
Concentrate on widest audience	-	-	.673
Develop intellectual/cultural interests	.559	-	-
Serve as adversary of government	-	.743	-
Avoid stories with unverified content	-	.681	-
Cronbach's alpha	.5167	.3291	.3097

Findings show that Brazilians support a different mix of interpreter, disseminator and adversarial roles than that of American journalists. Factor 1--the interpretive role--had a different loading than that of the U.S. survey. The interpretive role consisted of providing analysis of complex problems, investigating government claims, providing entertainment, and developing intellectual and cultural interests. Factor 2--the adversary role-- had a different loading than that of the U.S. survey as well. The adversary role consisted of serving as an adversary of government and added avoiding stories with unverified content. Factor 3--the disseminator role--consisted of getting information to the public quickly and concentrating on the widest audience.

The particular factor loading among Brazilians had some roles considered more important by respondents than others. The outcome points to a combination of the interpretive and the disseminator roles as the larger perception of Brazilians journalists. Respondents perceived investigating government claims and analyzing complex problems as the most salient components of the interpretive role. Journalists working at news agencies and at newspapers were more likely to perceive both dimensions as extremely important. Journalists working at TV stations were more likely to consider as extremely important developing cultural interests of the public and providing entertainment. They were less likely to support the roles of serving as an adversary to government (14.1%) and avoiding stories with unverified content (29.5%). Television journalists' low interest in supporting an adversary role may be partially explained by the medium's dependence on government advertising. In 1999, Brazilian television stations received 67.8% of all the federal government stipend earmarked for advertising, with 58% of it

being assigned to *Globo* network (Rodrigues, *Folha de S. Paulo*, <http://www.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil>, March 3, 2000).

The two components of the disseminator role received different ratings by journalists at all media. While getting information to the public quickly was rated as extremely important by about 64% of the respondents, only 21.6% of the sample gave the same rating to concentrating on the widest audience. About one-third of the journalists working at TV stations rated concentrating on widest audience as extremely important, while less than 20% of each of the other media groups perceived this role as extremely important.

Table 1.4 Percentages of Journalists by Type of Medium Who Saw these Roles as Extremely Important

Roles	Newsp.	Magazines	TV stations	News Ag.	Total
Investigate claims	67.1	55.8	65.3	84.0	65.6
Get information quickly	62.2	64.9	64.1	72.0	63.7
Provide analysis	64.0	58.5	46.1	68.0	60.0
Develop cultural interests	45.5	37.6	59.0	44.0	46.5
Avoid unverified content	32.9	35.0	29.5	44.0	33.3
Serve as adversary	24.3	20.7	14.1	36.0	22.3
Concentrate in widest audience	19.0	18.1	33.3	20.0	21.6
Provide entertainment	16.2	10.4	21.8	16.0	22.3
	N 222	N 77	N 78	N 25	N 402

Findings offered limited support to predictors of media roles. Salary, years of professional experience, age, and chance to help people somewhat predicted media roles although some of them in an awkward direction. Findings revealed that adversarial supporters were more likely to be older and experienced males, married, and members of a union.

The eight questions that loaded on three factors (interpretive/investigative, adversary and disseminator functions) were combined to form three scales with each one weighted equally. The majority of the Brazilian journalists, like their American colleagues, appeared to

hold a pluralistic view. Most of them endorsed more than one media role. While the disseminator (77.6%) and the interpretive/investigative (66.2%) prevailed as core media roles, the adversary function emerged as a strong one (47.2%) as well. About half of the respondents who endorsed the disseminator role also supported the adversary role, and more than two-thirds of them supported the interpretive role. There were no single adversary proponents. About 70% of those who endorsed the adversary role also supported the interpretive role, and 82.6% supported the disseminator role. Male journalists were more willing to support both the adversary and the disseminator roles than females.

#### Identification with Foreign Models

Self-perceptions of identification with foreign models of journalism were explored through quantitative and qualitative methods, with the latter being the more revealing. Survey respondents expressed their level of agreement with four statements about the Brazilian journalistic style as shown in table 1.5. Results show that 43% of the subjects believed their craft was very much influenced by the American model of journalism. Very few journalists (6.2%) believed that that Brazilian journalism was an indigenous creation that truly represented Brazil's culture and society. About 16.4% strongly agreed that Brazilian journalism is the result of a mix of several influences adapted to local conditions and only. Most respondents dismissed the French influence on Brazilian journalism.

In an attempt to determine how respondents perceived the journalism practiced in Brazil, United States and France, they were asked to rate nine attributes on a 1 to 7 scale. Results based on the median responses provided some insights. Respondents were very cautious to characterize their own journalism, choosing the mid-point for six of the nine attributes. During personal interviews with well-known journalists the same attributes got a distinct rating.

Table 1.5 Self- Perceptions of the Brazilian Journalistic Model N 402

Statements	Percentage saying they Strongly agree	Mean
Brazilian journalism is very much Influenced by American journalism	43.0	3.22
Brazilian journalism is a mix of several Influences adapted to local conditions	16.4	2.59
Brazilian journalism in an indigenous creation	6.2	2.14
Brazilian journalism is very much Influenced by French journalism	1.0	1.63

Brazilian journalism, in the respondents' view, was more biased than American and French journalism. They also classified Brazilian journalism as opinionated and nonliterary. American journalism was perceived by respondents as more independent, more investigative and more objective than Brazilian and French journalisms. French journalism was perceived as more opinionated, more analytical and more partisan than Brazilian and American journalisms.

In the open-ended sections of the survey, respondents were more candid about their views. The following excerpts of their comments suggest that there are more differences than similarities among journalistic cultures.

*"French journalism is adequate to those who like political analyses and inadequate to those who prefer practical, useful information. American journalism offers a lot of information, but little analysis. And Brazilian journalism offers a lot of analysis, but little information."*

*"Brazilian journalism has visual qualities and good international coverage. American journalism is too focused on national issues and does not offer good international coverage. Americans are more investigative. Brazil is too vulnerable to political and economic powers. Brazilian journalists still view their craft as art instead of a business."*

*"French journalism is old fashioned. American journalism is biased, lobby-dominated. Brazilian journalism is superficial."*

Personal interviews with well-known journalists of São Paulo revealed that although Brazilians identify with the American model, they are far from emulating it. Journalist Mino Carta, executive director of the monthly news magazine *Carta Capital* and former publisher of some of the most important news magazines in Brazil in the last 30 years, believes that Brazil has developed a caricature of American journalism.

"There has been a distortion of some American lessons. Our model is inspired in the *USA Today*. Newspapers such as *The New York Times* have little influence in Brazil." In his opinion, Brazilian journalism imitates the appearance but not the substance of the American journalism. Nonetheless, he thinks that Brazilian journalism did not do a caricature of the French model in the past. "Although Brazil was unsophisticated and peripheral, it had more personality than today" (Personal interview, May 1998).

Alberto Dines, media critic and former executive director of some of the most important newspapers published in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, also believes that Brazilian journalists reproduce a caricature of the American model. "In the past some papers cloned the French newspapers such as *Libération*. Today they clone the facade, the appearance. They clone *The Miami Herald*, *The USA Today*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. They do not clone *The New York Times*" (Personal interview, May 1998).

According to Dines, the English and the French influence on Brazilian journalism lasted until the 1980s. After that, what he calls "American marketing" displaced the European influence. Journalist Marco Antonio Resende, editor of the prestigious news magazine *Exame*, has a vivid memory of the French model been emulated by *Jornal da Tarde* of São Paulo in the 1960s and the 1970s.

"*Jornal da Tarde* followed the French model by producing long, very personal, impressionist detailed stories. After the paper's reform, the impressionist stories moved to the Saturday edition. We are good at adapting models. Now we emulate the American model. Marketing research is directing the stories that are published today in the Brazilian media. Research departments ask reader what they want to read about" (Personal interview, May 1998).

Apparently, the American influence is more noticeable in management decisions, such as how to increase circulation, than in professional values and norms, such as fairness and accuracy. That is the opinion of Julio César de Barros, newsroom manager at Brazil's most prestigious newsweekly magazine. "American marketing research techniques are guiding the Brazilian news making process. *Veja* publishes front covers similar to *Time* and *Newsweek* on the same week or a week later. We do not look for inspiration in European magazines. Our journalistic style is similar to that of the American, but in a more opinionated form, more Brazilian like" (Personal interview, May 1998).

These journalists also believe that American journalism is becoming more European and European journalism is becoming more Americanized.

### Conclusion

Brazilian journalists working for leading news organizations of São Paulo-- Brazil's main media hub-- held a pluralistic view regarding media roles at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They perceived themselves as a combination of disseminators (77.6%) and interpreters (66.2%) of information and to a lesser extent as adversaries of government officials (47.2%). To some extent, their pluralistic view parallels the one found among Americans, who also perceived themselves in the early 1990s as interpreters (62.9%) and disseminators (51%) of information, yet with a small group favoring an adversary role (17.6%).

However, the nature of Brazilian's pluralistic view is dissimilar than that of Americans because the three clusters consisted of a different combination of variables. Findings, though, reveal more than a statistical discrepancy. The particular nature of Brazilian's pluralistic view mirrors the cultural context in which journalists operate and the way journalism has developed in the country. While Brazilians and Americans share some perceptions regardless their nationality, their local social-political environment seems to define their value system. In contrast to Americans, Brazilian journalists do not enjoy special rights of access to government and business information. In addition, Brazilian public institutions produce unreliable statistics, and business institutions usually embellish their own facts and figures, which creates an information environment that lacks accuracy. Furthermore, journalists and news organizations are still adapting to press freedom since the country's redemocratization.

Therefore, while journalists perceive themselves as disseminators and interpreters of information, this same information sometimes is unverified, inaccurate and far from independent, as stated by survey respondents in open-ended questions and journalists who participated in the qualitative part of the study.

The views of journalists such as Mino Carta and Alberto Dines -- role models to more than one generation of Brazilian professionals—illustrate the particular notion of how mass media in Brazil has evolved as a derivative of European and American media systems at different points in time. In their view, the process of absorption of professional norms and values from the United States has taken the form of a caricature. It is possible, though, that in this long soul search of its own model, Brazilian journalists have sought a Brazilian interpretation of both French and American models. More research is needed on how journalists

in developing nations deal with foreign influences and integrate them into a particular cultural context.

Further research must find new paths to explore the process of local creation and absorption of professional values transmitted by journalism of developed nations to journalists of developing nations. Cross-national studies need to be based on the results of simultaneous surveys instead of post hoc comparisons. The mere replication of survey instruments in cross-national studies faces cultural and technical constraints that prevent generalizations. A more effective approach might be the study of professional values among journalists with compatible cultures and similar social-political environments such as professionals in neighboring Latin American countries.

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*Int'l*

Running head: PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEMS DEMISE: THE NETHERLANDS

**Public Broadcasting Systems Demise Within the Dominant Private System Model:**

**The Netherlands Case**

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## PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEMS DEMISE: THE NETHERLANDS

### ABSTRACT

In many countries, the electronic media in the 1990s were being reinvented, not because of a desire within established systems to change or decline, but because of challenges made by new technologies. This paper demonstrates that even a country like The Netherlands with a firmly established public system can have its system challenged and perhaps lost when confronted with broadcasting based on advertising, competition and ratings. This case study of the public broadcasters in The Netherlands reveals how this transformation occurred and the potential of the country to retain its public system.

### **Introduction**

In many countries, the electronic media in the 1990s were being reinvented, not because of a desire within established systems to change or decline, but because of challenges made by new technologies. Investigating the potential demise of public broadcasting systems in a country like The Netherlands demonstrates the impact that alternative, advertising-based services such as cable and satellite-delivered channels can have on the established media of countries with public systems. This competition is now being further extended through Internet-based, broadcast-style programming.

It is obvious that new competition in any electronic media system will challenge existing services. As the twentieth century ended, so too did the dominance of public broadcasting systems that had been established as 'the system' in countries like Great Britain, Canada, and The Netherlands. Audiences migrated to advertiser-supported, commercial services in countries that had well-developed public systems financed by license fees. As a result, these public systems found a need to develop programming to be ratings-competitive with commercial services and to find the money to run such operations.

A case study of the public broadcasters in The Netherlands reveals how this transformation occurred. In a country where advertising was restricted on broadcast services and where the public broadcasters sought to 'give the audiences what it needs,' the introduction of new cable distribution and satellite-based commercial services took away substantial advertising dollars and audience share for the public who may be more interested in broadcasters giving them 'what they want.'

The investigation of the case of The Netherlands indicates the challenge in the twenty-first century for public broadcasters around the world. The question to be ultimately uncovered by such an investigation is what did a public system approach do for a country compared to what a private, advertising-based, ratings-driven system could do? The issue becomes an example of the erosion of high culture ideals by popular culture's power with the mass audience.

### **A Brief Cultural History of The Netherlands**

In order to begin a study of the media system of The Netherlands, one must note the starkly different approach to broadcast operation than that of the United States. McQuail

(1992):summarizes how, for the Dutch, broadcasting was structured to mirror the uniqueness of their society:

The Dutch system cannot be understood without reference to its history and to the basic principle of the 'pillarization' of its society, according to which the social structure was vertically stratified along lines of religious (especially Catholic or Protestant) or non-religious (especially socialist/humanist or liberal) groupings or communities, rather than horizontally by social class or occupation (p. 96).

As a society which cultivated a pillarized structure prior to the twentieth century, the broadcasting system as it developed also emerged within this structure. The major political and ideological organizations were allocated time on the system based on membership size and became producers while the government maintained responsibility for the physical operations (Wieten, 1994).

The arrangement was not without its difficulties from the start. The original five organizations allocated the bulk of the broadcast time struggled with the logistics of cooperation. A general sense of tense relations between the groups existed in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly between AVRO as a self-described neutral group and the religion-based pillars of the time (Wieten, 1994). By the 1960s, the concept that each of the various points of view were being served through the pillarized system began unraveling. The TROS organization, for example, began increasing membership size through its solicitation of members of all beliefs, thereby increasing its opportunity for broadcast time (Head, 1985). In addition to these challenges to the pillarized media, emergence of new technologies allowed the infiltration of American-style broadcasting over the past few decades, challenging the country's ability to maintain its public service, non-commercial broadcast system operation. This study provides an overview of this development and questions the ability of regulators in The Netherlands to maintain the spirit and structure of its public service system in light of modern developments.

#### The Nature of The Netherlands

Hundreds of years of history would have to be traced in order to provide a thorough understanding of the people and culture of The Netherlands. For a country of such limited physical size, even going back to the seventeenth century and tracing its expansionism and worldwide influence would be a complete study.

Perhaps the most overriding uniqueness of The Netherlands is the co-existence of many political and social organizations with similar or identical goals, but with different ideological bases. This compartmentalization, or pillarization as it is called, has been encountered in television, radio, the press, education, and in sport and social clubs (Buning & Verheijen, 1990). Religious rivalries dating back to the nineteenth century caused various separate identities to be created for these various groups, which each developed its "own schools, hospitals, trade unions, newspapers, (and) recreational clubs...." (Head, 1985, 109). This unique characteristic of The Netherlands carried over into its broadcasting, causing the creation of a radio and television system which has historically been state owned but not state operated. The established ideological or political organizations have created most of the programming (Lijphart, 1968).

### Broadcasting History

McCavitt (1981) traces Europe's first true broadcast operation to The Netherlands in 1919. The Netherlands Radio Industry Company, under the direction of electronics innovator Hансо Henricus Schotanus a Steringa Idzerda, developed the program Soiree Musicale and broadcast it on November 6, 1919. The company continued regular broadcasts on its transmitter through 1924, but not without difficulty. By 1922, financial shortages resulted in solicitation of funds from listeners and even through print media in England. Money from England helped keep Idzerda's operation afloat until the founding of the British Broadcasting Company ended financial support from England and brought to an end the radio service of The Netherlands Radio Industry Company.

Emery (1969) notes that other companies were also developing transmitting facilities in the early 1920s. In 1920, a radio transmitter was installed in Amsterdam and used by the Amsterdam Stock Exchange to send stock quotations, and other such financial material to subscribers. In 1922, the same transmitter was used by a press agency to broadcast press reports to 50 provincial newspapers.

Widespread interest developed in broadcasting when, in mid-1923, a transmitter was built by manufacturing interests in Hilversum to broadcast programs to the public (McCavitt, 1981). The Nederlandse Seintoestellen Fabriek (NSF, Netherlands Transmission Apparatus Factory) had been developed from among several Dutch shipping companies in 1918 to manufacture navigation equipment needed for ships, but economic needs following World War I caused NSF to diversify. The company had the transmitter built and began allowing others to provide the program service in order to boost sales of its radio receiving

equipment. NSF was taken over by the Philips company in 1926. This one broadcasting outlet had essentially no competition (Wieten, 1994).

The NSF/Philips service had better technical quality and financial backing than Idzerda's, but high business expenses led to changes in its operation (McCavitt, 1981). In March, 1924, the foundation HDO (Hilversum Broadcasting Organization) was developed in the Hilversum area, with a Board of Directors made up of representatives from radio listeners and equipment manufacturers. This joint enterprise of business and the public took control of programs and finances and began soliciting membership donations. With the development, a new 500 watt transmitter was built, designed to improve and increase coverage (Emery, 1969). By 1927, heavy production of radio receivers had emerged and radio programming was improving under the direction of HDO. NSF also leased air time to commercial organizations and later to newly organizing broadcasting organizations (Wieten, 1994).

HDO was eventually renamed AVRO and was touted as a non-sectarian, non-political organization (Paulu, 1967). But, religious and political groups had been organizing separate broadcasting groups from the early 1920s, including: (a) KRO (Catholics), (b) NCRV (Orthodox Protestants), (c) VPRO (Liberal Protestants), and (d) VARA (Liberals). AVRO and the other four groups filed applications and received broadcasting authorizations from the government, allowing them to produce and present most of broadcasting's material, under the stipulations of the new broadcasting laws that were enacted from 1928 to 1930. This development was the beginning of the pillarized access to broadcasting for which Netherlands has been known into the 1990s.

The groups shared the same transmission facilities of the two transmitters until improved facilities were built near Utrecht in 1940, with the service later augmented by low power transmitters in outlying areas (Head, 1985). The transmitting facilities became the property of the public broadcasting corporation, NOZEMA, in 1935. This arrangement allowed the major organizations and the state to be represented in the operation of the radio broadcasting system, while responsibility for maintaining the transmitters remained with The Netherlands Post Office (Netherlands Information Service, 1962).

After World War II, some effort was made to make the Dutch system more like the BBC, but the pillarized system remained. In 1947, the five groups collaborated and came to an agreement in which each would own its own properties, but would share them with all others. The NRU was formed to coordinate this agreement, allowing each member-corporation to maintain autonomy in production and presentation of programs (van Zoonen & Wieten, 1994).

Through the 1960s, KRO and NCRV shared one channel while AVRO and VARA shared the other, with smaller groups, including VPRO, splitting up the remaining available time (Emery, 1969). Into the 1970s, the five groups which made up the NRU shared time on two national AM services, originating in studios in Hilversum, relayed by three low power transmitters. Additional programs were provided by 16 FM transmitters.

In terms of television's introduction, although early television development can be traced back to the 1920s, implementation of an established system began in the early 1950s. The Netherlands selected the 625-line PAL system, with 6 channels allocated for a two-year trial period and with the broadcasting societies bearing the cost of programming (Wieten, 1994). In 1951, the television society, NTS was formed, and the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences authorized service to begin. The Philips company provided the transmitter and studio, the Postal Service provided the tower and antenna, and the radio associations provided the programs. As a Dutch company, Philips exercised pressure on the Dutch government for the technical development of the system, claiming that, in the post-war economy, Philips' ability to initiate the experimental service would have a significant impact on the potential for the company's continued existence (van Zoonen & Wieten, 1994). The television service was extended following its first two years of success, and in 1956, an administrative order authorized television on a permanent basis. The programming on television was divided among the five large groups as had been done for radio and others were allowed access on a limited basis (Emery, 1969).

### Broadcast Regulation

An early effort at governmental regulation of communication took place with the Telegraph & Telephone Act, enacted in 1904 (Emery, 1969). This law covered the then-existent wired communications services, but would later be applied to broadcasting as it developed. Amendment of the Act in 1919 acknowledged some of the post-War developments in wireless communication and gave the first licenses to radio manufacturers (Wieten, 1994). New regulatory action in 1928 and 1930 divided air time equally among the larger four pillars, while the smaller VPRO was allocated seven hours per week. The 1930 act was essentially an extension of the 1904 law, and according to some people, a confirmation of the status quo that continued in subsequent regulations (McQuail, 1992). The system remained essentially unchanged up until Germany's occupation of The Netherlands in World War II.

A new structure of the broadcast operation emerged when the different organizations created the NRU in 1947, a change which was recognized with new broadcasting control. The Minister of Education, Arts & Sciences issued administrative orders assuming jurisdiction over the NRU and set forth governing principles: (a) regulation of broadcasting in general would be exercised by a commissioner working through the minister, (b) two representatives from each of the larger and one representative from the smaller VPRO would make up the union board, (c) associations would provide (collectively) 780 hours of programs each week, (d) part of broadcasting time would be made available to churches to produce or have programs produced, and (e) the Postal Administration would collect fees on radio receivers and grant operating expenses to various bodies of the NRU (Emery, 1969).

The first true broadcasting law was enacted in 1967/1969 (Fleury & Koch, 1994). This law broke the monopoly of the five organizations, gave access to more groups with allotted time based on membership size, and merged the NRU (radio) and NTS (television), forming the NOS, The Netherlands Broadcasting Foundation. The NOS became responsible for the coordination of the broadcasting organizations and technical aspects of the broadcast facilities, the latter of which had been the responsibility of the Postal Telephone and Telegraph Office since the mid-1930s. The act also allowed advertising for the first time and created the Television Advertising Foundation, STER, which had to prepare and transmit the advertising and collect the fees. About the time of the 1967/1969 Act, competition among member associations was developing and traditional divisions among the pillars were decreasing. The 1967/1969 Broadcasting Act made it possible for new organizations to be admitted to the system, rather than ignoring small groups' different views or forcing them to join the established organizations. The percentage of broadcast time was in line with the relative size of the organization (Buning & Verheijen, 1990).

The 1967/69 act was revised three times in the 1970s, then replaced by the Media Act in 1988 (NOS, 1982; Ministry of Welfare, 1992). For example, in 1975, The Media Act divided broadcasting associations into three categories based on size and allocated broadcasting time among the three categories on a ratio of 5:3:1, after the NOS, which got twice as much broadcasting time as an 'A' category station. 'A' category groups were required to have at least 450,000 members, 'B' category groups, at least 300,000, and 'C' category groups, at least 150,000.

The NOS provided the type of programs that might not have been adequately covered by the various associations, serving the public with material that is covered in a neutral fashion, particularly programs such as news and sports (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). The Media Act stipulated that the public broadcasting organizations would provide a variety of

programming and the operation could not be designed for profit-making, for themselves or anyone else (McQuail, 1992).

Subject to certain provisions, prospective associations with at least 60,000 members were allocated broadcasting time; they received three hours of radio time per week for a maximum of two years and half the television broadcasting time of a category 'C' association (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). Broadcasting time was to be allocated to educational broadcasting institutions whose constitutions indicated that their sole objective was to provide educational broadcasts for schools or to further education and training. Government agencies were also granted time for public information purposes. Churches and organizations of a spiritual nature were also potentially eligible, as long as their broadcasts were for religious broadcasts and spiritual topics.

The Media Authority created by the Media Act allocated broadcasting time to political parties and groups that won one or more seats at the most recent election to the Lower House of Parliament (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). Broadcasting time was also allocated on an incidental basis to parties and groups fielding candidates in forthcoming elections to the Lower House or European Parliament. The Media Authority also held several other responsibilities, including: (a) monitoring observance of the radio, television, subscriber television, cable newspaper and cbletext laws and regulations, (b) allocating broadcasting or cable time to national, regional and local broadcasting organizations, and (c) setting the fees which the national broadcasting organizations receive for their programs.

### Financing the System

Broadcasting in The Netherlands was originally envisioned as a commercial service, but the parliamentary actions of the late 1920s established the operation of the system within the public service, pillarized structure (Emery, 1969). The operating organizations financed their own operations until 1940 with voluntary subscriptions from members. Later, a tax was assessed on each radio receiver, and the associations made other money through sales of program guides and member subscriptions. Parliament enacted legislation assessing an annual license fee for television sets in the 1950s. The three categories established in the Media Act were also used to determine the allocation of public funds and broadcasting time to each of the organizations. The various organizations which maintained adequate memberships received funds from the government to support programming (Ministry of Welfare, 1992).

Since the late 1960s, advertising has played an increasing role in supporting the Dutch system (Brants, 1985). A few organizations sought to allow advertising in the 1960s, but the established programming organizations opposed such a change. In response to changes taking

place in the broadcasting landscape of the 1960s, television advertising started in 1967, radio in 1968. This arrangement allowed a limited amount of advertising time, but it did not create a commercial system. The advertising was aired at specified times and under certain conditions so that it was separate from the programming.

Broadcast stations were not allowed to operate on a true commercial basis until 1991 (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). Under the 1991 law, only the Radio and Television Advertising Association (STER) was allowed to transmit commercials on public radio or television in The Netherlands and all money raised was placed in the same fund as the receiver taxes and distributed to the associations. Many restrictions were placed on the commercial stations, including (a) they could operate only on the cable system, not as broadcast stations, (b) contractual agreements had to be made with the cable operators to get on the cable systems, (c) they had to be national stations, with at least 60% reach of all Dutch homes connected to cable, and, (d) under European Common Market guidelines, they could devote no more than 15% of their airtime nor more than 20% per hour to commercials and should also strive to have at least half their programs produced in Europe.

### Programming

Overall, the program breakdown on radio in the 1960s consisted of 60 to 70% music, but so-called serious and light music (classical and other such so-called good music) made up most of the content, with very little popular music programming. The other 30% of the programming was made up of news and discussion, religious, and educational. In the early 1990s, the five national radio stations broadcasting on AM and/or FM offered just under 600 hours per week of programming (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). Radio 1 provided news and current affairs, provided by national and regional broadcasting organizations, Radio 2 provided a variety of lightweight news programs, Radio 3 provided popular music intended for a younger audience, Radio 4 was a classical music and arts station, and Radio 5 served a type of educational service with courses and information for specific target groups.

Television did not have a fast start in The Netherlands (Brants, 1985). It was introduced in 1951, but only about 25,000 sets were in use by 1956. For television in the 1950s, about 12 to 13 total hours per week of programming was initially offered on the one channel, then a second channel began in 1964 (van Zoonen & Wieten, 1994). A typical program schedule in 1955 consisted of programming from about 8 to 10 p.m. featuring such types of programs as current affairs and weather, documentaries, and original studio plays. Into the early 1980s, the public system offered only about 100 hours of programming per week (McQuail, 1992). There were three television channels in 1992, providing about 150

hours per week of programming (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). The broadcasting organizations as well as those interested in developing commercial systems began to battle for control of television.

A breakdown of the description of the 1992 programming as described in brochures from each major broadcasting organization provides the best understanding of the public system. The Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation (NOS) provided the most programming, with 23 hours of television and 86 hours of radio programming per week (NOS, 1995). The variety of general interest programs consisted of news, sports, information, education, culture, and children's programming, along with items for minorities. The NOS was also responsible for coverage of the Olympics, state functions such as general elections and government activities, and other such special events.

Two categories of programs were the responsibility of the NOS, as stipulated in the 1988 Media Act: ones suited to a common approach, and ones which would supplement those produced by the other authorized broadcasting organizations (NOS, 1995). The Media Act required that a minimum of 20% of the NOS' programs consist of cultural programs. For television, programs of the NOS were concentrated on the third channel.

The General Broadcasting Association (AVRO) had the longest history of any Netherlands broadcasting organization and classified itself as general and independent, distinguishing this character as different from neutral (AVRO, 1995). The program content from the AVRO was characterized as that which maintained its general, independent character. The AVRO claims the world's first current affairs radio program (in 1924), even in comparison with the BBC.

The Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO) provided nine hours per week of television and 40 hours per week of radio programming (EO, 1995). The EO's goal was to provide a wide range of Christian programming, ranging from information to culture to entertainment. The Catholic Radio and Television Broadcasting Organization (KRO) meanwhile provided programs based on Catholic religious values, with central themes of orientation, engagement, and tolerance. The KRO also provided a variety of programs, including entertainment, informational, and cultural development (KRO, 1995). The KRO noted that their group, as was the case for all the six big broadcasting associations, provided more than 70 hours per week of radio and television programming. The KRO program schedule has included a series on monasteries, an in-house drama series De Brug (The Bridge), a series about people who have agreed not to use their cars for 100 days, and imported series like Neighbours from England, and Perfect Strangers and The Muppet Show from the United States.

Meanwhile, The Netherlands Christian Radio Association (NCRV), one of the Class A broadcast organizations, described its 14 hours of television and 64 hours of radio programming as a comprehensive package of information, drama, foreign comedies (for example, *The Cosby Show*), and films, combined with its own entertainment programs (NCRV, 1995). The NCRV entertainment material ranged from variety to quiz shows.

Among the Class B organizations, the VPRO described its programs as being designed for originality and quality, not popularity and simplicity (VPRO, 1995). By not being concerned with ratings, the VPRO said it could surprise the audience with unusual and controversial programs. A list of award-winning documentaries and programs which have been so idiosyncratic as to cause riots, witch hunts, and official reprimands characterize the VPRO's productions. In addition, the organization has carried such British television programs as *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Another organization, the VARA, described its programs as general in nature, reflective of an organization which considered itself modern, progressive, and independent (VARA, 1995). The VARA believed strongly in measuring success by ratings numbers and produced current affairs, news analysis, comedy, and cultural programs.

One of the newer organizations, the Veronica Broadcasting Organization (VOO) described itself as the youngest and fastest-growing group (VOO, 1995). The VOO in the early 1990s had the most members among The Netherlands broadcasting organizations, with more than 1 million people. VOO's predecessor, VRON, the Free Radio Broadcasting Organization, was originally an off-shore (pirate) commercial radio station. After the Dutch government shut the station down, continued efforts allowed the group to eventually achieve official broadcasting status, beginning as a Class C organization and by the early 1990s having progressed to Class A status. In relation to this means of development, the VOO focused on popular entertainment programming geared toward a 15 to 35 year old demographic group, but also produced news and current affairs material. Veronica later left the public system.

The TROS organization has been very influential in Dutch broadcasting (TROS, 1995). The group, which as noted earlier built its membership size by recruiting members of all beliefs to increase its size and therefore amount of broadcast time, said it fulfilled the role of a general broadcasting service for the audience, ungoverned by the dogma which characterized other groups. After initiating the effort to lure members to the group in order to increase size and broadcast time, the term trossification became the accepted terminology for this change in the means by which the organizations operate. Competition was important to the group; therefore, the focus of their programming was on entertainment. A means of describing their programming might be by noting TROS's detractors, who say the group

cheapened Dutch broadcasting by providing simple amusement. Other organizations were forced to attempt to match their entertainment programming and began acquiring American syndicated programs (Head, 1985). TROS has, however, also produced documentaries and dramas for which awards have been won.

Beyond the many other smaller organizations which also produced smaller quantities of a similar variety of programs, there was also EDUCOM, The Educational Broadcasting Combination, created in 1986 (EDUCOM, 1995). This cooperative oversaw the creation and distribution of a complete range of educational programming for children and adults. Content was made up of typical school-course material as well as vocational training instruction.

Even though each group was expected to have a unique characteristic to its style of programming, the organizations operating under the Media Act were required to carry a variety of programming (Ministry of Welfare, 1992). The Act specified that 25% must be informative programs, 5% must be educational, 20% must be cultural, and 25% entertainment. Each organization decided for itself how to fill the remaining 25% of available time. The increased competition among the broadcast organizations combined with the influence of pirate and foreign signals resulted in programs which reflected less content related to ideological or religious principles and more entertainment appealing to a mass audience.

### New Technologies

The overview of the broadcast system in The Netherlands reveals a direction taken by the country over a period of several decades that began unraveling in the 1990s. Technological changes contributed greatly to these changes in the system, both because of the technological limitations and because of technological advances. Available spectrum space in The Netherlands came under increasing scarcity as new developments were introduced (Maltha, 1994). Cellular phones, private mobile radio, satellite communications, digital audio broadcasting, high definition television, and digital terrestrial television broadcasting are among some of the services vying for spectrum space. The size of the country places a restriction on the available space to allow all these new services to use the airwaves, resulting in a 1994 cable homes passed level of 92% and penetration of around 80% and an effort to switch television broadcast signals to cable.

In the early 1990s, the cable system was carrying the public broadcasters, along with subscription television and radio, cable newspaper, cabletext, and satellite-delivered material (Buning & Verheijen, 1990). New arrangements in the 1990s allowed the cable systems to carry foreign public service channels and satellite channels, within advertising limitations

guidelines. The cable systems were subjected to a must-carry rule regarding national channels, but were able to carry local and regional stations if desired. Rules also specified a percentage of programming on the cable system which had to reflect Dutch culture (Olderaan & Jankowski, 1988). Such rules were also affected by the European Union directive of 'Television Without Frontiers,' which required 50% of programming be European works (McQuail & Siune, 1999).

A fitting example of the influence of new technologies in The Netherlands by the mid-1990s was the pioneering of new music delivery techniques on cable. The nation's record companies developed new promotional and profit-making opportunities in the country, benefiting largely from one of Europe's highest cable penetration levels (Hoos, 1994). In a society in which tradition, culture, and belief in quality programming have been long ingrained, embracing the new media world has been a difficult struggle. The new technologies continue to exploit the commercial aspects of the media. By the year 2000, this impact was even more obvious with the startup of the web site net.congestion, described as the International Festival of Streaming Media, in Amsterdam. This organization's web site described net.congestion as "the first international festival of streaming media in The Netherlands" and as being "devoted to new forms of broadcasting and live programming that have emerged around the Internet" (net.congestion, 2000).

### Broadcast Structure Reform

Changes in the broadcast system have resulted from the technological developments over the past few decades. The concern about a limited spectrum and an increasing number of services dependent upon gaining spectrum allocation forced The Netherlands to seek alternative ways to allow the system to develop.

Beyond the technological issue, however, Dutch television has experienced a forced metamorphosis. A system in which each religious or ideological group produced its own programs independently of each other with no regard for cooperation or competition has been under scrutiny since the 1960s. Some researchers, in fact, blame television itself for the beginning of so-called depillarization (van Zoonen & Wieten, 1994). In the 1990s, too many developments occurred for The Netherlands to not respond with changes. The pillarized system was increasingly challenged by budget problems, lack of competitive programming, and a desire by many Dutch business people to not be left behind in the new developments of an information society (McQuail, 1992). Established public broadcasters were forced to change their style of operation from a focus on public service to a focus on competition, as

shown by the effort by NOS to compete with the commercial RTL-4 (Edmunds, 1992a; Edmunds, 1992b).

Pillarization began unraveling when off-coast pirate stations originally challenged The Netherlands' control of its broadcast system in the 1960s, but the government was eventually able to shut those operations down (Emery, 1969). A new problem occurred with the introduction of RTL-4 in 1989, a television channel operated out of Luxembourg, but part Dutch-owned and intended solely to serve audiences and advertisers in The Netherlands (Fuller & Edmunds, 1993). Up until the introduction of RTL-4, the typical evening on Dutch television consisted of content such as old movies, reruns of American sit-coms, and news and public affairs programs. Regular scheduling of programming in the American prime time television style was uncommon. The satellite-delivered, commercial RTL-4 was created to take away viewers by providing American-style programming (Vasterman & Miraldi, 1992). The new station quickly captured the public attention and is credited with permanently changing the broadcasting system of The Netherlands.

NOS and the public broadcasting organizations were forced to react to RTL-4's efforts, but their changes were not widely accepted (Edmunds, 1993; Edmunds, 1994a). By 1993, when RTL-4 had captured 30% of the Dutch viewing audience, the three public television channels began providing daytime programming for the first time. The official watchdog outfit, the Dutch Media Commission granted the three public channels an extra 6,200 hours for the extra programming, which was scheduled to be available from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. each weekday (Fuller, 1993). RTL-4's programming had been about 60% foreign material, then RTL-5 was introduced in 1993 with the intent of capturing even more of the Dutch audience with about 75% foreign programming (Fuller, 1992; Johnson, 1993). By 1994 when market share had dropped below 50% for the public stations, the legislature began an effort to guarantee the public stations 10 years of protection against commercial stations. The commercial challenge and attempts to amend the Media Act caused speculation that the Dutch media law could be headed for extinction (Edmunds, 1994b).

More than the television public broadcasters have been affected by the changes, as a thriving television production business has also developed (Janssen, 1993). The previous system's description as uncompetitive in which poorly managed associations retained the rights to broadcast on three official channels has been altered through the commercial stations' introduction. In late 1994, then-public broadcaster Veronica (VOO) developed a new alliance with Endemol, an independent production company, and new commercial channels continued to develop from these types of partnerships (Fuller, 1994).

In early 1995, The Netherlands introduced a possible new law that for the first time would permit sponsorship on the Dutch public broadcasting system (Edmunds, 1995). Several factors influenced the action, including the loss of audiences to the commercial stations, European Common Market regulations regarding sponsorship, and possibly in reaction to the changes in the government in The Netherlands, as the former party was taken out of office the previous year. Political and regulatory changes continued to affect the public system.

### More Recent Changes

The NOS underwent a reorganization that went into effect January 1, 1995 as one effort designed to strengthen the Dutch public system. One role of the NOS (Nederlandse Omroep Stichting/Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation) is to coordinate and supervise the contributions to public radio and television by the various organizations. An Internet site from the NOS called Hilversummary characterizes the past organization and character of the Dutch public system and details some of the changes and issues related to commercial versus public broadcasting in the mid-1990s (NOS, 1995). Among the changes: (a) creation of The Netherlands Programme Service (NPS) as a separate body from the NOS to specifically be the program-making body; (b) departure from the public system by Veronica (VOO) to become a commercial radio and TV service as part of its alliance with independent Endemol; and (c) a 1995 amendment of the Media Act no longer requiring annual checks of membership numbers of the various public organizations and creating a cooperative rather than competitive relationship among the groups. For television, Nederland 1 would be shared by AVRO, KRO, and NCRV; Nederland 2 was to be shared by EO, TROS, and VOO; and Nederland 3 would feature VARA and VPRO along with some NOS programs. The changes allowed each channel to meet certain public programming percentages rather than each organization having to meet expectations of a specific amount of culture, information, and education programs. The five national radio services were also to be made stronger and more identifiable.

The NOS report indicates the desire through the changes to maintain the Dutch public system as strong and competitive, but admits the difficulty of the challenge, noting for example that the 51% prime-time television audience share the Dutch public systems had in 1994 could not last. The report questioned the effects of television on the society and the resulting potential negative impact if the public broadcasters attempted to hold their audiences by programming commercial-style sex and violence content. Noting that the commercial services were concerned less with effects of programs and more with making a

profit, the NOS report argued that the government had a responsibility to remain competitive, but within the 'giving the audience what it needs' philosophy. To serve its public function, the NOS report contends the quality programming cannot be of a niche type and received by a limited sized audience, but must maintain a substantial audience.

Combined with the eroding audiences size, the non-commercial style of public broadcasting was being supplanted by stations running advertising. Data from a Dutch market statistics group detailed the changes in the 1990s (Olan, 1995):

**Table 1**

Year	Number of stations	Number with Advertising	% of Total
1991	298	17	6%
1992	321	117	36%
1993	345	177	51%
1994	367	211	57%
1995 (through May)	372	226	61%

Hilversummary (NOS, 1998) announced radical changes in Dutch media legislation again in early 1998. As had been noted as early as a 1994 Hilversummary report, Dutch media experienced continuous change in the 1990s. Continued discussion within the Dutch government regarding the future of the public broadcasting service and adaptation to European Union legislation regularly caused regular changes to the Dutch Media Act.

Hilversummary (NOS, 2000) summarized the focus of the public system, by saying that it should act independently of political movements and commercial interests. Through the late 1990s, legislation continued to change in response to the challenges and debates regarding the operation and justification of the public system. Among the multiple other major changes, Dutch parliament replaced the traditional broadcasting license fee by a special levy as a supplement to income tax. The new system went into effect in January 2000, and guarantees Dutch public broadcasting a fixed amount of public funding, adjusted for inflation. These funds are collected as part of the Dutch income tax.

In the mid 1990s, as a streamlining measure, public broadcasters 'licenses' ('concessions' in Dutch terms) were reduced from 10 to 5 years (until 2000 instead of 2005). Veronica, which began life as a pirate radio station on the North Sea, left the public sector when this was announced and went commercial. The broadcasting organizations that remained in the public system were given more leeway to raise funds. By 2000, legislation led to a ten-

year concession for the national public broadcasting public system as a whole, not for each broadcasting organization as had been done previously (NOS, 2000). By the year 2000, the Dutch public system had re-established its goals and principles, based still on the original concept of what public service broadcasting should be. The Hilversumsummary web site provides in-depth descriptions (in English) of these ideals. The system has been retained for now, but one of the highlights of the current competitive environment is the inclusion within the public system's programming descriptions are statements of minimum audience ratings and weekly reach. The public system is still clearly only able to exist in terms of its competitiveness with commercial operations.

### Conclusion

Two major forces have battled for broadcast power in The Netherlands. One is the traditional philosophy of the public broadcaster who believes the approach to broadcasting is to give the public what it needs. The alternative capitalism-based philosophy says the only way to measure success of the service is through measurement of audience size, which shows that people are getting what they want.

Early actions in The Netherlands started the nation's broadcasting system toward a commercial means of operation, but late 1920s legislative action established a system that was considered best for the country, particularly in light of its already pillarized society. Today's actions suggest what is best for the country is a strong economy, and the maintenance of a non-commercial, public system seems at odds with such a goal. Had the Dutch government and traditional forces been quicker to recognize the trends toward technological invasion of the country which could not be controlled, as shown by the services from Luxembourg, the Dutch economy might be benefiting more from current activities.

The hegemony in The Netherlands is changing, as the ideology of public broadcasting is being supplanted by the ideology of capitalism. The initial commercial stations have forced the public broadcasters to react, and the result may be the loss of a formerly unique system of broadcast operation. Those who conduct research about the effects on the society from this change will likely focus on the erosion of a high culture ideal embodied by the public system of the past with the growth of the popular culture of the private system of the future.

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**Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide:  
Government Policies and Internet Access**

**Abstract**

**Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide: Government Policies and Internet Access**

Latin American governments have sought to increase access to information technologies in a variety of ways. This cross-sectional time-series analysis of nineteen countries between 1990 and 2000 examines government policies and Internet usage. It finds that Internet use is strongly associated with a country's wealth and the telecommunications infrastructure. The government policies with the strongest influence on increasing access are changes to the tariff structure—such as creating flat-price dialing schemes—and full market liberalization.

by  
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## Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide: Government Policies and Internet Access

### Introduction

The development of information and communication technologies was one of the principle themes of the 2001 Americas Summit in Quebec, Canada. Final declarations proposed that the countries develop a "Connectivity Agenda" and established the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas. Leaders of the various countries agreed that they must "move toward expanding access to global knowledge and full integration into the knowledge society." They also expressed their commitment to promoting the development of the telecommunications infrastructure, providing an appropriate policy and regulatory environment, using the technology to enhance health care and education, and encouraging the growth of e-commerce. This agenda was supported in the final Plan of Action. The country leaders saw new communication technologies as essential to meet the three main goals set out in the Summit, which were strengthening democracy, creating prosperity, and realizing human potential.<sup>1</sup> Many other groups around the world are proposing similar measures. Participants at the World Telecom Development Conference passed a resolution in support of the Americas Connectivity Agenda during the 2002 convention in Istanbul, Turkey. Similar resolutions addressed the global digital divide and called on governments to implement policies to bridge the gap between haves and have-nots.



Similar debates and proposals exist in Latin America. Since the late 1990s, Latin American governments, academics, and business groups have discussed the growth of the Internet and the rapid changes in telecommunications technology. Speaking in a July 2001 conference, Mexico's secretary of communications and transportation argued that countries can no longer measure communication by the number of telephone lines. Rather, said Pedro Cerisola

<sup>1</sup> Pedro Cerisola y Weber, opening remarks, IV Conferencia Internacional, El Reto de las telecomunicaciones en el marco de la reforma del estado en México, Mexico City, Mexico, 18 July 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Minges, of the International Telecommunication Union detailed many of the problems with Internet access indicators, including lack of standard definitions of what is considered a "user." See Michael Minges, "Counting the Net: Internet Access Indicators," Internet Society, INET 2000 ([www.isoc.org/inet2000/cproceedings/Re/8e\\_1.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet2000/cproceedings/Re/8e_1.htm)).

<sup>3</sup> Data sources for all charts in this paper are as follows: Internet user data is from the International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication Indicators Database 2001. Estimates for 2000 figures are provided for El Salvador and Guatemala. Estimates or revised 2000 data are from news articles for Brazil, Panama, and Paraguay. Revised 1996, 1998, and 1999 Argentina data come from Ben A. Petrazzini and Agustina Guerrero,

<sup>4</sup> Promoting Internet development: the case of Argentina," *Telecommunications Policy* 24 (2000): 89-112. GDP data is from the World Development Indicators database 2001, published by the World Bank.

## Bridging Latin America's Digital Divide: Government Policies and Internet Access

y Weber, they must speak about "connectivity" and access to all forms of new communication technologies.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Mexican conference, government officials and academics debated how to strengthen Internet usage in ways that benefit Mexico, while minimizing the negative effects. The primary assumption throughout the conference was that without broad access to the Internet, positive benefits would remain restricted to an elite group.

Many of the debates over the years were based on the observation that Internet technology expanded rapidly but unevenly in Latin America. Until 1997, most Latin American countries had fewer than 20 Internet users per 1,000 people. Starting that year, though, a few countries began to make large gains in increasing Internet access as measured by the estimated number of users.<sup>3</sup> Chart 1 shows that Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Costa Rica all had more than 60 users per 1,000 people by the year 2000.<sup>4</sup> The puzzle is why some countries were able to rapidly increase the number of Internet users, while other countries have continued their gradual, but steady, growth rate.

The data suggest that a digital divide exists in Latin America. This paper will explore the factors that can increase Internet access in Latin America. It does so through a comparative analysis of Internet use and government policies across nineteen countries between the years 1990 and 2000. This study is one of the first to gather data on and analyze Internet access and public policy across the Latin America region. Although a few research projects address similar

<sup>1</sup> Pedro Cerisola y Weber, opening remarks, IV Conferencia Internacional, El Reto de las telecomunicaciones en el marco de la reforma del estado en México, Mexico City, Mexico, 18 July 2001.

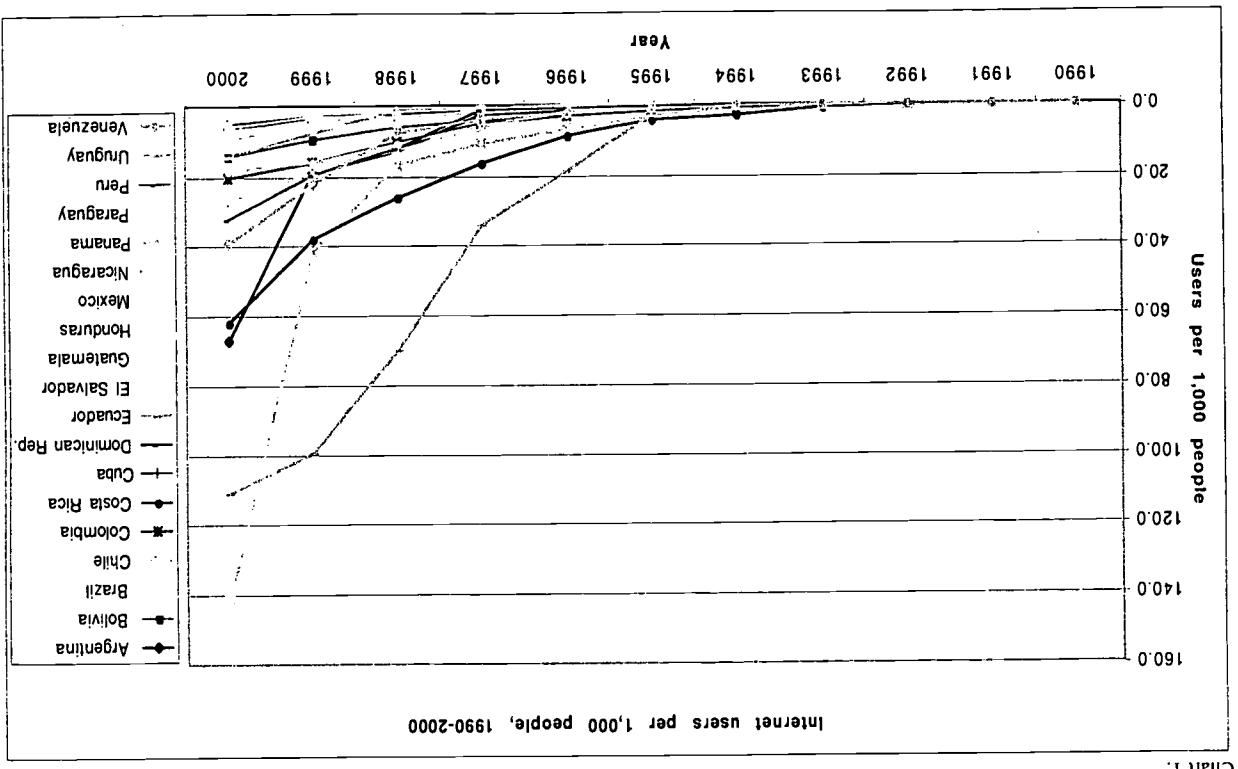
<sup>2</sup> Michael Minges, of the International Telecommunication Union detailed many of the problems with Internet access indicators, including lack of standard definitions of what is considered a "user." See Michael Minges, "Counting the Net: Internet Access Indicators," Internet Society, INET 2000 ([www.isoc.org/inet2000/cproceedings/Re/8e\\_1.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet2000/cproceedings/Re/8e_1.htm)).

<sup>3</sup> Data sources for all charts in this paper are as follows: Internet user data is from the International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication Indicators Database 2001. Estimates for 2000 figures are provided for El Salvador and Guatemala. Estimates or revised 2000 data are from news articles for Brazil, Panama, and Paraguay. Revised 1996, 1998, and 1999 Argentina data come from Ben A. Petrazzini and Agustina Guerrero,

<sup>4</sup> Promoting Internet development: the case of Argentina," *Telecommunications Policy* 24 (2000): 89-112. GDP data is from the World Development Indicators database 2001, published by the World Bank.

questions, this study also would be one of the first to use time-series analysis to show how policy changes may affect Internet connectivity. Thus, this research increases our understanding about Internet development and the digital divide in the Americas.

In this paper I first review the relevant literature and outline the research question. Then I propose several models and test them to identify the variables associated with increased Internet access. Finally, I discuss the findings and suggest further research.



### The digital divide

The amount of published works and research reports in the past eight or ten years on Internet topics has expanded at a rate almost comparable to that of the computer networks. Many scholars are concerned with the possible consequences of Internet access and use. Optimists see the Internet as a technology that will help socioeconomic development and strengthen democratic procedures. Pessimists say that the Internet is increasing the barriers to economic development, making poor countries even poorer; moreover, the technology is reinforcing the power of elites, hindering democratic movements. All these scenarios are in some way concerned with who has access to the "Information Society" and who does not.

Perhaps the broadest analysis of Internet access and democracy is Pippa Norris's 2001 book *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide*. She looks at the gap between those who have access to the Internet and those who do not with data from the macro level or national context, the meso level of political institutions within a country, and the micro or individual level. Using a number of quantitative studies and data on 179 countries, she concludes the global digital divide between countries is substantial and growing.

The main cause, she argues, is the overall lack of economic development. She does not specifically look at Latin America—rather, she focuses on Europe and the United States for most of the book—but she does outline the major debates surrounding the Internet. Her purpose is to explore the causes and possible consequences of the inequalities we see in Internet access.<sup>5</sup>

A second major comparative work is Eszter Hargittai's study of the differences in Internet connectivity among countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. This research project looks at economic indicators, human capital, institutional legal environment, and existing technological infrastructure. She finds different

<sup>5</sup> Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

levels of access among rich countries, suggesting a digital divide among OECD member countries. The statistical analyses show that economic wealth and telecommunications policy are the best predictors of a country's Internet connectivity among these countries. Connectivity is important, Hargittai believes, since the level of Internet diffusion can influence how a country holds its place in the global economy.<sup>6</sup>

The literature on Latin America and the Internet also addresses some of these same issues about access to technology and democracy. Ricardo Gómez examined the restricted access to the Internet in Latin America and called for specific action, including government policies, to take advantage of more positive uses of Internet for social development.<sup>7</sup> The Internet is creating new forms of exclusion and widening the gap between rich and poor in Latin America, maintained Margaret Everett in her article about the new technology and democratization.<sup>8</sup> In some of my previous work, I found government policies in Chile had a dramatic effect on increasing Internet access and that on-line forums provided public spaces where Chileans could debate current events in their country and propose solutions.<sup>9</sup>

Although my ultimate concern is how the Internet can be used to strengthen democracy, this paper will just focus on the first part of the puzzle—the differences in Internet access across Latin America.

<sup>6</sup> Eszter Hargittai, "Weaving the Western Web: explaining differences in Internet connectivity among OECD countries," *Telecommunications Policy* 23 (1999): 701-718.

<sup>7</sup> Ricardo Gómez, "The Hall of Mirrors: The Internet in Latin America," *Current History* 99, no. 634 (February 2000): 72-77.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Everett, "Latin America On-Line: The Internet, Development, and Democratization," *Human Organization* 57, no. 4 (1998): 385-393.

<sup>9</sup> Eliza Tanner, "Las Grandes Alamedas: The Paradox of Internet and Democracy in Chile," Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000; Eliza Tanner, "Links to the World: The Internet in Chile 1983-1997," *Gazette 61* (Feb. 1999): 39-57; Eliza Tanner, "Chilean Conversations: Internet Forum Participants Debate Augusto Pinochet's Detention," *Journal of Communication* 51, No. 2 (June 2001): 393-403.

As mentioned, Norris's work, with evidence from 179 countries, concludes the global digital divide between countries is substantial. The literature on Latin America suggests that the same might be true in that region. Chart 2 shows estimated Internet users in OECD countries compared with countries in Latin America. The graphical representation seems to indicate that for most countries, the gap between the OECD and individual countries in Latin America appears to be widening.

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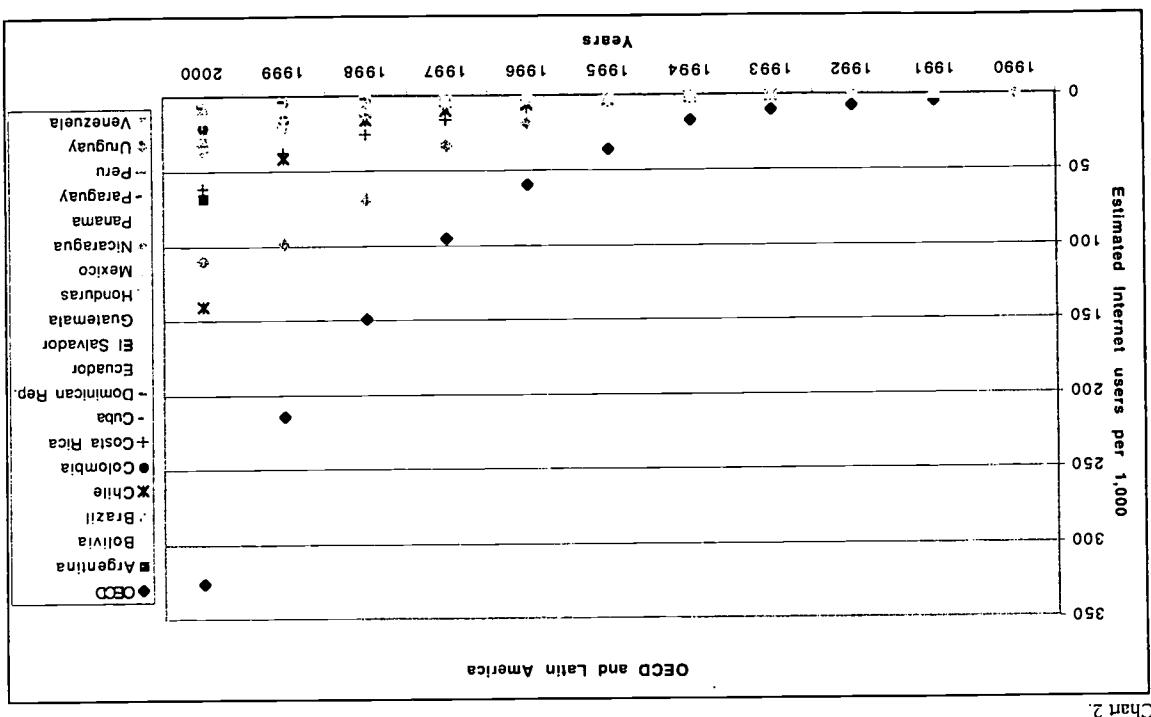
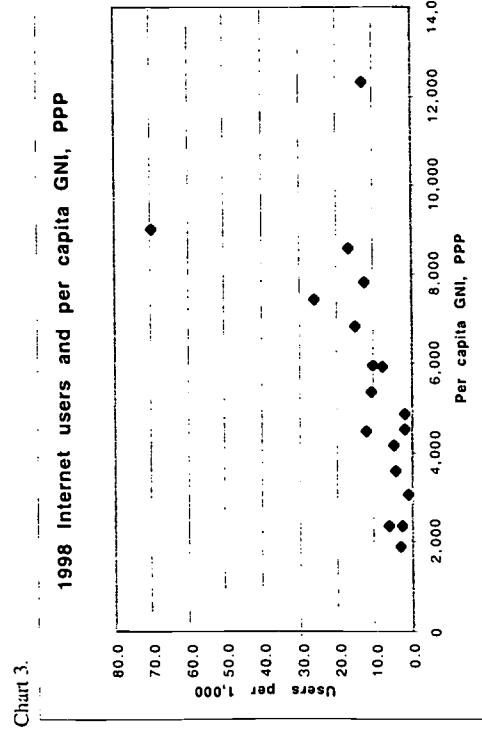
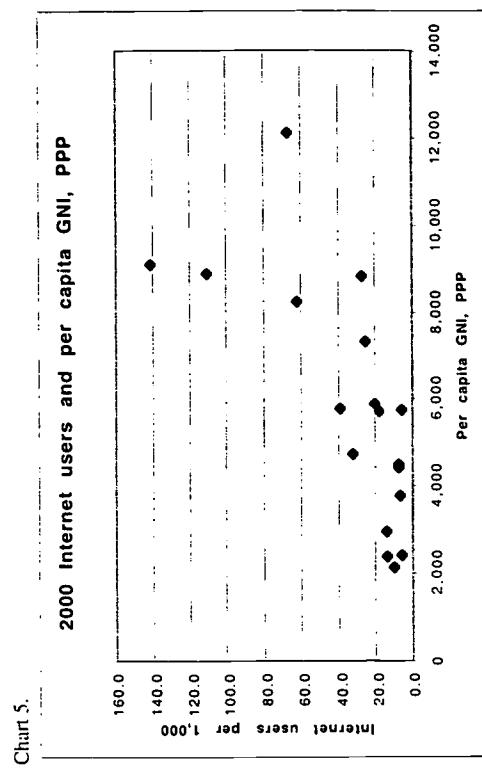


Chart 2.

Several studies find that people in richer countries generally have better access to communication technologies, including the Internet.<sup>10</sup> This is not surprising. Charts 3, 4, and 5 show a positive association between per capita gross national income based on purchasing power parity (GNI, PPP) and Internet access in Latin America, where richer countries have more people with access to the Internet.<sup>11</sup>



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<sup>10</sup> See Luis H. Gutiérrez and Sanford Berg, "Telecommunications Liberalization and Re-Regulatory Governance: Lessons from Latin America," *Telecommunication Policy* 24 (2000): 865-884, for a review of studies dealing with the effects of different variables, including GDP, on telecommunications development. Specific studies on Internet access include Larry Press, "The State of the Internet: Growth and Gaps," *Internet Society, INET 2000* [www.isoc.org/inet2000/chproceedings/08/8e\_4.htm]; Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Eszter Hargittai, *Telecommunications Policy* 23 (1999): 701-718.

<sup>11</sup> PPP GNI is gross national income (formerly GNP) converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates. An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GNI as a U.S. dollar has in the United States. See the appendix for more information on the variables.

In the following three tables, you will find coefficients, associated standard errors, p-values, and correlation coefficients for three different estimations of the model that correspond to values, and correlation coefficients for three different estimations of the model that correspond to

...e three years for the charts included in this paper. The variable was analyzed using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and the model specification is netusers=  $\beta * \text{gnipcppp}$ .

noticeably higher or lower than what would be expected in the region or when a country hits a "take-off" point, as seemed to happen in Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina after 1997. The next section will propose a statistical model to identify and test the variables associated with increased Internet access.

Table 1.

Variable	B (coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value	r	Adjusted r <sup>2</sup>
1998 per capita GNI, PPP (gnipcppp1998)	0.0032	0.0012	0.0183	0.3014	0.2578

Table 2.

Variable	B (coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value	r	Adjusted r <sup>2</sup>
1999 per capita GNI, PPP (gnipcppp1999)	0.0049	0.0017	0.0123	0.3324	0.2907

Table 3.

Variable	B (coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value	r	Adjusted r <sup>2</sup>
2000 per capita GNI, PPP (gnipcppp2000)	0.0097	0.0024	0.0011	0.4983	0.4669

Each of these three regressions shows a strong positive association between per capita GNI, PPP and the estimated number of Internet users. The relationship is statistically significant at the p<0.02 level for 1998 and the p<0.01 for 1999 and 2000. Just as important, the relationship is also substantively significant. The coefficient in the regression for the 2000 data (Table 4) is 0.0097, meaning that an increase in per capita GNI of \$4,000 is associated with an increase of estimated Internet users of 38.8 per 1,000. Even though the adjusted r<sup>2</sup> is moderately high for a model with one variable, it represents a low level of explained variance.

This means that there are other variables besides a country's wealth that may also explain the level of Internet usage. The charts and data show that a few countries seem to have a much higher or lower Internet access than would be expected compared to other countries with similar GNI, though their access still is associated with GNI. These countries are Uruguay and Chile (2000) and Argentina (1998). Thus the puzzle arises when some countries have access that is

Luis Gutiérrez and Sanford Berg of the Public Utility Research Center at the University of Florida analyzed the changes in government policies and telecommunication development in Latin America between 1985 and 1995. In their statistical analysis they found gross domestic

<sup>11</sup> Ezler Hargittai, "Weaving the Western Web: explaining differences in Internet connectivity among OECD countries," *Telecommunications Policy* 23 (1999): 70-718.

<sup>12</sup> Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 62-63.

product and greater population density are positively associated with investment in telecommunications as measured by telephone lines per capita. They also found political democracy, economic freedom, and sound regulatory frameworks were important variables in the modernization of telecommunications in Latin America.<sup>14</sup> Martha Fuentes-Bautista's study of universal service policies in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela during the 1990s also pointed to the importance of government policies and telecommunications development.<sup>15</sup>

A few case studies of Internet use in Latin America suggest specific factors that may increase access. In my previous research I found that during the early years of Chilean Internet development, academics and business leaders assumed general economic growth and the importation of more computers would automatically expand Internet access. However by 1998,

the growth had slowed and people who formerly eschewed any government involvement argued that the Chilean government needed to take action. In the latter half of the year, experts debated government Internet policies and by January 1999, they developed a list of specific recommendations.<sup>16</sup> Much to the surprise of the experts, the government began to act on the proposals, including lowering telephone rates for Internet traffic. Between August and October, the number of Internet users increased from 375,000 (2.3 percent of the population) to 625,000 (4.5 percent), according to the official figures released by Claudio Hohmann, minister of Transportation and Telecommunications.<sup>17</sup> After a number of other developments and policy changes, the government reported in October 2000 that two million Chileans or 14 percent of the

population had access to Internet.<sup>18</sup> The Chilean government under President Ricardo Lagos continues to actively promote technological developments and Internet. Chileans generally attribute the increased growth to changes in government policies, especially since the growth took place during an economic recession.

Ben Petrazzini and Agustina Guerrero found a similar case with the Internet in Argentina. The estimated number of users began to climb rapidly after the government made two key policy decisions. The policies reduced the price of leased lines and reduced the tariffs for local Internet dial-up calls through a special dialing scheme.<sup>19</sup> These changes spurred growth and the number of users increased from about 60,000 in 1996 to about half a million in 1998. In the chart for 1998, Argentina has lower than expected Internet use based on its GNI, but by 2000 this had changed.

These two cases contrast with Internet development in Mexico. The data show Mexico has not made any great changes in the number of people connected to the Internet. Although Mexico has the second largest number of people connected to the Internet in Latin America after Brazil, this number only represents about 3 percent of the population. During a 2001 summer research trip to Mexico, I found out that the government was just starting to address issues of Internet access and development in that country. President Vicente Fox made technology and communication priorities in his new government and called for the development of an "e-Mexico" project. The four areas of emphasis for the e-Mexico project are education, health, small businesses, and modernization of the state.<sup>20</sup> With this project, as well has a complete

<sup>14</sup> Luis H. Gutiérrez and Sanford Berg, "Telecommunications Liberalization and Regulatory Governance: Lessons from Latin America," *Telecommunication Policy*, 24 (2000): 865-884.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Fuentes-Bautista, "Universal Service and Telecommunication Reforms: Lessons from Five Latin American countries," paper presented at the convention of the International Communication Association, Communication Law and Policy Division, Washington, D.C., USA, May 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Chilean Presidential Commission on New Information and Communication Technologies, 1999 report to President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Santiago, Chile, 20 January 1999 (Comisión Presidencial de Nuevas Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación, Informe final, Santiago, Chile, 20 Enero 1999).

<sup>17</sup> Rodrigo Guinquil, "1999 El año de Internet", "Noticias", *Mouse Digital*, 29 October 1999 [www.mouse.cl].

<sup>18</sup> Debora Gutierrez, "2 millones de chilenos tienen acceso a internet: Cifra representa un alza de 186 % en 9 meses," *La Tercera*, 3 October 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Ben A. Petrazzini and Agustina Guerrero, "Promoting Internet development: the case of Argentina," *Telecommunications & Policy* 24 (2000): 89-112.

<sup>20</sup> Julio Cesar Margain y Compeán, e-México Chief Operating Officer, interview by author, Mexico City, Mexico, 31 July 2001.

writing of telecommunication laws, the Mexican government hopes to increase the access to new communication technologies. The Mexican case is one that demonstrates the possible effects of no specific government policies on Internet development.

Based on these studies, it appears increases in the number of Internet users can be attributed to the general economic development in a country, to the telecommunications infrastructure, and to government policies. I propose the hypothesis that Internet usage is not strictly a function of economic development, but that it can be influenced by other factors.

*Research design*  
To test the different explanations for Internet expansion Latin America, I collected data from the following nineteen countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. For each of the countries I collected data on Internet users, economic development, telecommunications infrastructure, and government telecommunication and Internet policies.

I will now briefly describe the variables and the ways in which the data were gathered. The sources of information on all these variables are listed in the bibliography. Generally, I first consulted academic works and case studies. Then I read government and business documents and publications. Information in the case studies was updated with news articles. I sought clarifications and missing data through phone conversations with government officials in Latin America or over email. I was able to collect information on each of the countries for the years 1990 to 2000, and with some variables, I was able to find data for 2001 as well. I used the information on each of the countries to generate the variables for the statistical analysis. A summary of all the variables is found in Table 4.

I am measuring Internet access (inusers), by the estimated number of Internet users per 1,000 people. A number of institutions collect statistics on Internet development in Latin America. The International Telecommunication Union, based in Geneva, Switzerland, is an international organization affiliated with the United Nations that works with governments and the private sector to coordinate global telecommunication networks and services. The ITU publishes a yearly database of telecommunication indicators, including estimated Internet users. The Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) was created by the Organization of American States to promote telecommunication development in the Americas. CITEL often works with the ITU to provide information and policy recommendations. A third organization, Nua.com, was founded in 1996 to provide information on Internet developments and trends. It was acquired in June 2001 by the Irish company Scope Communications Group. One of the features of Nua.com is "How Many Online?" which provides estimates of Internet users around the world from surveys and published reports. Within each country in Latin America, the ministry or government agency dedicated to telecommunication issues will collect data and statistics. Some countries, such as Chile or Mexico, provide large amounts of information to the public about telecommunications and Internet usage.<sup>21</sup> Other countries, such as Panama, do not routinely collect and publish such data.

My primary source for Internet access figures came from the International Telecommunication Union 2001 database; these numbers were verified or revised with other data sources, including conversations with government officials in several countries. The rate per 1,000 is used to control for population and provide a more comparable indicator across countries. If the information on users from the countries was different than the ITU database, then I took an

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Subsecretaría de Telecomunicaciones, "Informe de estadísticas básicas del sector de las telecomunicaciones en Chile: Informe No. 2," Gobierno de Chile, Subsecretaría de Telecomunicaciones, April 2001 [[www.sutel.cl/estadisticas/estadisticas.html](http://www.sutel.cl/estadisticas/estadisticas.html)].

average of the different numbers or used the figure most often cited. For example, in the case of Peru, the numbers used and cited by the Peruvian government and CITTEL coincide but are markedly different from the numbers provided by the ITU. In that case, after conversing with government officials, I used the Peruvian government's data since those are the figures on which they would base their policy decisions.

Researchers at both the ITU and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development have outlined some of the challenges with gathering data on Internet infrastructure and usage.<sup>22</sup> For example, sometimes governments are not clear on the techniques they use to estimate Internet users. In Latin America, governments generally use the same method: they count Internet subscribers and extrapolate from that figure the number of people with Internet access. Other variables often used to measure Internet growth are the number of host computers and servers. In this paper I chose to use estimates of Internet users as my variable instead of **1** other indicators commonly used in reports. Data on Internet hosts is easier to obtain since **2** estimates are done through random computer samplings, but the number of host computers does not necessarily indicate the number of people in a country with Internet access. Rather, the number of Internet hosts is a general measure of infrastructure development. Another reason I selected Internet users as a variable is because Latin American governments, businesses, and other researchers commonly use these figures in discussions and policy meetings.<sup>23</sup>

I measured economic development with **per capita gross national income (GNI)** based on purchasing power parity (gnipc). Purchasing power parity rates means an international

dollar has the same purchasing power over GNI as a U.S. dollar has in the United States. In other words, PPP measures how many goods local money can buy within the country, not the value of the money internationally. GNI is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad. I used the World Bank 2001 database as the source for these figures. Beginning with their 2001 publications, the World Bank switched from using gross national product (GNP) to GNI. All of the data are in current international dollars and no data exists on Cuba.

I measured the development of the telecommunications infrastructure with three different variables. The first is **teledensity** (teledens), or the number of fixed telephone lines per 100 people. My source for this information was the 2001 ITU database. Teledensity is an important concept in Internet access since until relatively recently, most access to the Internet was through dial-up connections. Therefore, not only did a person need a computer and modem, he also needed a telephone line.

Two specific government policies can influence the telecommunications infrastructure and the availability of Internet in a country. The first is the **privatization of state-owned telephone companies** (privat). For this variable, I gathered information on each country and coded the year of privatization as 1; no privatization was coded as 0. The second policy is **liberalization of the telecommunications market** (openmar). Policy makers argue that liberalization allows competition, which can reduce prices for consumers and expand the product offerings, including Internet access. Years in which a country had a monopoly in telecommunications were coded as 0. The year or years with partial liberalization or opening of the market were coded as 0.5. Depending on the country, governments may allow competition in the market as 0.5. Depending on the country, governments may allow competition in the market as 1.

<sup>22</sup> See Michael Minges, "Counting the Net: Internet Access Indicators," Internet Society, INET 2000 [www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8c/8e\_1.htm] and Sam Paltridge, "Internet Infrastructure Indicators," Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, September 1998 [www.oecd.org/pdf/M000014000/M00014287.pdf].

<sup>23</sup> See Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

certain sectors, such as Internet or data transmission, but retain the monopoly on local telephone service. The year or years with full competition were coded as 1. As mentioned previously, data for these variables were gathered from academic articles and case studies, government and business documents, news reports, telephone interviews, and email contacts. The references are listed in the bibliography.

My theory also suggests that specific Internet policies can have a great effect on Internet use. Across Latin America, countries are establishing Internet policies, especially after the Americas Summit and the commitment by leaders to increase access to information technologies. These policies vary greatly. Some are in planning stages, such as the e-Mexico program, while others have been implemented as in Chile and Argentina. At times, the policies are incorporated in revisions of general telecommunications laws. I gathered information on Internet policies from reports and government documents.

A common type of research consists of "technical" papers or reports on the state of Internet development at various points of time and in different countries. Many of these reports and papers have been presented at international conferences dealing specifically with Internet issues. Often the language is non-technical and the papers are widely disseminated through Web sites. These papers may contain the most current information available and indicate new trends in research. In one such paper, researcher Larry Press proposed that a decentralized community should regularly measure the state of the Internet around the world. He gave specific indicators for the growth of the Internet through 1999 in a paper for the Internet Society's Global Summit (INET) in 2000.<sup>24</sup> Another paper from the same conference by Saul Hahn of the Organization of American States recounted how the Internet started in Paraguay, Guatemala, Panama, the

Colombian Andes, and Costa Rica. These papers may contain the most current information available and indicate new trends in research. In one such paper, researcher Larry Press proposed that a decentralized community should regularly measure the state of the Internet around the world. He gave specific indicators for the growth of the Internet through 1999 in a paper for the Internet Society's Global Summit (INET) in 2000.<sup>24</sup> Another paper from the same conference by Saul Hahn of the Organization of American States recounted how the Internet started in Paraguay, Guatemala, Panama, the

Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Belize.<sup>25</sup> Researcher Eric Arnun prepared an overview of Internet services in Latin America, charting the growth of Web pages and Internet hosts between 1997 and 1999.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the technical publications are extremely detailed, such as the lengthy case study of Bolivian Internet development written by Michael Minges, Sonia Jorge, and Ben Petrazzini of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).<sup>27</sup> Michael Minges pointed out that despite the interest in the Internet, there is a great need for comparable data from all the countries. He then outlined the limitations of ten indicators that try to measure infrastructure, access, and policy and called for more publicly-available research on developing countries.<sup>28</sup> A number of other case studies exist, including one by Oscar Robles Garay in which he described the history of Mexico's Internet connections.<sup>29</sup> Ramiro Montecalegre examined how Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru gained access to the Internet and established evolving Internet strategies.<sup>30</sup>

A U.S.-based research organization known as the Mosaic Group studies international developments in the information technologies. In 1997 the Mosaic Group began studying the Internet in its Global Diffusion of the Internet (GDI) project and has produced reports on almost thirty countries since then. The researchers affiliated with the GDI project developed a

<sup>24</sup> Saul Hahn, "Case Studies on Development of the Internet in Latin America and the Caribbean," Internet Society, INET 2000 [[www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8c8d5.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8c8d5.htm)].

<sup>25</sup> Eric Arnun, "Internet Topology and Connectivity in the Americas," final report prepared for the Technical Conference for the Implementation of IABIN, Brasilia, Brazil, April 1999 [[www.iabn.org/documen/internet/report.html](http://www.iabn.org/documen/internet/report.html)].

<sup>26</sup> Michael Minges, Sonia Jorge, and Ben Petrazzini, "The Internet in the Andes: Bolivia Case Study," International Telecommunication Union, February 2001 [[www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int)].

<sup>27</sup> Michael Minges, "Counting the Net: Internet Access Indicators," Internet Society, INET 2000 [[www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8e8c1.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8e8c1.htm)].

<sup>28</sup> Oscar Robles Garay, "Evolucion de Internet en Mexico y en America Latina" in *Internet: El Medio Inteligente*, ed. by Octavio Islas and Fernando Gutierrez (Grupo Patria Cultural, Compania Editorial Continental, Mexico, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Ramiro Montecalegre, "Waves of change in adopting the Internet: Lessons from four Latin American countries," *Information Technology & People* 11, no. 3 (1998): 235-260; Ramiro Montecalegre, "A Temporal Model of Institutional Interventions for Information Technology Adoption in Less-Developed Countries," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 16, no. 1 (1999): 207-232.

<sup>24</sup> Larry Press, "The State of the Internet: Growth and Gaps," Internet Society, INET 2000 [[www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8e8c\\_4.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet2000/cdproceedings/8e8c_4.htm)].

framework for analysis of the diffusion and absorption of the Internet worldwide. This framework tries to measure the Internet's pervasiveness, geographic dispersion, sectoral absorption, connectivity infrastructure, organizational infrastructure, and sophistication of use within countries.<sup>31</sup> The Latin American Network Information Center at the University of Texas at Austin supports research into trends in Latin American networking. One research report provided user profiles and listed estimates of Internet users in Latin America as of mid-1999.<sup>32</sup>

Besides gathering information from technical reports on Internet development, I collected the actual government documents containing Internet policies. An analysis of these government documents shows that they tend to emphasize eight features:

- Increase Internet access by reducing or setting prices or tariffs, including establishing special dialing plans for dial-up access
- Set up public Internet access centers (telecenters)
- Reform education by incorporating Internet and computers in schools
- Promote use of information technologies in businesses and develop the local technology or software industry
- Generate content for the Internet (Web) in the local language
- Provide on-line government services, reform government administration, and "modernize the state"
- Promote the use of information technologies to improve health and access to health care
- Promote the use of information technologies to support sustainable development and environmental projects

Of these areas, the ones most directly linked to increasing Internet access are the rate changes and the public access centers. Given these common characteristics of government policies and the experiences of Chile and Argentina, I created two variables to measure government policies. Data were gathered using the same techniques and similar documents as

explained with the telecommunications variables with the sources listed in the bibliography. The first variable is captures the policies related to reducing dial-up charges or **changes in tariffs**

(tariffs). The years the country enacted a policy to increase Internet access by reducing or setting prices or tariffs, including establishing special dialing plans for dial-up access, were coded as 1. If the government wrote a plan, but there is no evidence of government action, the years were coded as 0. Years with no rate changes were coded as 0. The second policy is the establishment of **public access centers or telecenters** (alltele). Since I did not want to create another variable

that measured Internet users, I needed to be careful with how I operationalized this indicator. The variable measures the implementation of a country-wide strategy by either the government or non-government organizations to open public access centers. Years with this network of telecenters, whether started by the government, private businesses, or non-government organizations, were coded as 1. Years with no evidence of such a project, or a project in the planning stages but not yet implemented, were coded as 0. Since I am measuring government policies, isolated examples of telecenters did not fit this definition and thus were coded as 0.

Another indicator measured the possibility for Internet access based on the year the **country connected to the Internet** (netcon). If there was no international connection, then a country would not have any Internet users.<sup>33</sup> During the 1980s and early 1990s, organizations and universities in the countries experimented with dial-up connections, connections to download email once or twice a day, and so forth. However, since these tended to be restricted experiments, I coded as 1 the years a country had permanent, full connection to the Internet. A year without such an Internet connection was coded as 0. Data were gathered from academic

<sup>31</sup> Peter Woldorf and Seymour Goodman, "The Internet in Turkey and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis," Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), Stanford University, December, 2000 [mosaic.umn.edu/cgi-bin].

<sup>32</sup> Fernando Rodríguez-Alvarez, "Present and Future of the Internet in Latin America: A TILAN Research Report," Trends in Latin American Networking, Latin American Network Information Center, University of Texas at Austin, June 1999 [www.lanic.utexas.edu/project/tilan/reports].

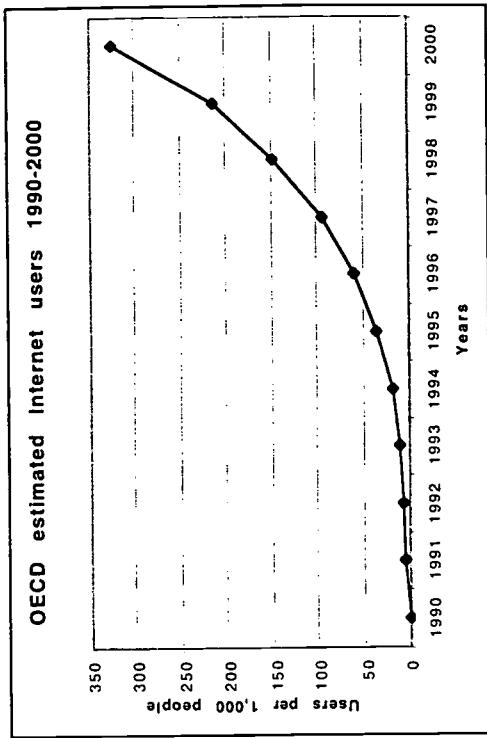
<sup>33</sup> See the discussion in Oscar Robles Garay, "Evolución de Internet en México y en América Latina," in *Internet: El Medio Inteligente*, ed. by Octavio Islas and Fernando Gutiérrez (Mexico: Grupo Patria Cultural, Compañía Editorial Continental, 2000), 3-25.

articles, information from the National Science Foundation on the development of the NSFnet, government documents, and newspaper or magazine articles.

Besides these measurements of infrastructure and government policy, I needed to introduce several variables that would control for certain effects common to time-series analyses or would better capture what we see with Internet development around the world. Of course, much of the change in Internet access can be attributed to what happened the previous year. To control for this in the model, we introduce a time lag variable ( $t_1$ ), which is the value of the previous year's Internet access as measured by estimated number of Internet users per 1,000 people.

Finally, we generated a variable that would measure the natural growth of the Internet when wealth or economic development and teledensity are not a problem, **OECD Internet** (oecd). To do this, I used the data from the World Bank, the OECD, and the ITU on Internet users in the OECD countries from 1990 to 2000. The OECD represents some of the wealthiest countries and between 1995 and 2000, these countries accounted for about 95 percent of all the Internet hosts in the world.<sup>34</sup> The following graph shows the increase in Internet users in OECD countries, which represents a growth that appears to be curvilinear and the first part of a typical S-curve in diffusion studies.<sup>35</sup>

Chart 5.



In the model, the OECD Internet number for each year was multiplied against other independent variables in the corresponding years. This would capture the greater effect the variables might have in subsequent years given the general condition of Internet development in the world. For example, increasing teledensity in 1990 would not necessarily increase the number of Internet users in a Latin American country given the lack of Internet development generally. However, the popularity and availability of the technology had increased worldwide by the late 1990s, so a change in teledensity during this time would have a much greater effect in increasing the number of Internet users. The multiplier thus brings into the statistical model the relationship we see with Internet growth around the world.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> We explored the simpler method of correction for curvilinear growth, which involves transforming the data using a natural log equation, but this equation erased the very effects of early adoption we were attempting to study. The equation also returned values that were incorrect given the complete context of the data set.

<sup>35</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Communications Outlook 2001* (OECD, France, 2001), 274.

<sup>36</sup> Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

Table 4.

Variable	Description	Scale	Source
Internet users (netusers)	Internet access measured by the estimated number of Internet users in a country	Per 1,000 people	ITU 2001 database and supplementary sources
Per capita GNI, PPP (gnippp).	Per capita gross national income (GNI) based on purchasing power parity	International \$ per capita	World Bank 2001 database
Teledensity (teledens)	The number of fixed telephone lines	Per 100 people	ITU 2001 database
Privatization (privat)	Year of privatization of state-owned telephone companies	Privatized=1, Not privatized=0	Various; see bibliography
Liberalization (openmar)	Year in which the country had a monopoly, partial liberalization, or full liberalization of the telecommunications market	Monopoly=0, Partial=0.5, or Full=1	Various; see bibliography
Tariffs (tarif(s))	Year in which the government reduced or set dial-up or other access prices	No change=0 Change=1	Various; see bibliography
Telecenters (altele)	Year of implementation of a country-wide strategy by either the government or NGOs to create public access centers or telecenters	No telecenters=0 Telecenters=1	Various; see bibliography
Internet connection (netcon)	Year the country established full connection to the Internet	No connection=0 Connection=1	Various; see bibliography
Time lag variable (tl)	Previous year's Internet access as measured by estimated number of Internet users	Per 1,000 people	ITU 2001 database and supplementary sources
OECD Internet (occd)	Internet access measured by the estimated number of Internet users in all OECD countries. The multiplier is indicated by an "m" following the variable name in the equations. Teledens becomes telem, privat becomes privatm, openmar becomes openmarm, tariffm becomes altele, netcon becomes netcomm, and gnipcpp becomes gnim.	Per 1,000 people	OECD, ITU 2001 database, and World Bank 2001 database

Model specification

The resulting data set is known as a cross-sectional time-series since the data cover several countries across a number of years (1990 to 2000). It cannot be analyzed using common regression techniques such as OLS. Traditionally, cross-sectional time-series analysis is carried out using a variation of OLS called Feasible Generalized Least Squares (FGLS). However, since the number of countries in this data set is almost twice the number of years, FGLS may overestimate the statistical significance of the results; it is better to use a variation of OLS called Panel Corrected Standard Errors (PCSE).<sup>13</sup> In order to correct for possible autocorrelation across the countries (within the panel), we included an additional correction. This correction mandates the use of a Prais-Winsten regression, similar to OLS. We calculated the results using the statistical software Stata 7.0. To better understand the relationships between the variables, we worked with different versions of this model. The models are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Model 1} \\ \text{netusers} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{telem} + \beta_2 * \text{netcomm} + \beta_3 * \text{tl} \\ \text{Model 2} \\ \text{netusers} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{telem} + \beta_2 * \text{privatm} + \beta_3 * \text{openmarm} + \beta_4 * \text{tariffm} + \beta_5 * \text{altele} + \beta_6 * \text{netcomm} + \beta_7 * \text{tl} \\ \text{Model 3} \\ \text{netusers} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{gnim} + \beta_2 * \text{privatm} + \beta_3 * \text{openmarm} + \beta_4 * \text{tariffm} + \beta_5 * \text{altele} + \beta_6 * \text{netcomm} + \beta_7 * \text{tl} \end{aligned}$$

Once we had the data and the models, the next step was to run the analysis and see if we could identify what factors help increase Internet access in Latin America.

<sup>13</sup> Nathaniel Beck and J. N. Katz, "What to do (and not to do) with time-series cross-section data," *American Political Science Review* 89 (1995): 534-547.

### Results and discussion

As noted earlier, previous research suggests there is a positive association between the country's wealth and access to communication technologies. When we ran a correlation test of per capita GNI and teledensity, we found the results as shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

Variables	r	p-value
Per capita GNI, PPP (gnipepp)	0.8308	0.0000
Teledensity (teledens)		
Per capita GNI, PPP with OECD multiplier (gpnim)	0.9485	0.0000
Teledensity with OECD multiplier (telem)		

There is a very high positive correlation between the two variables and the chi-square test shows a statistical significance of  $p < 0.00$ . Since they have such a high correlation, I will select only one for use in the models. Teledensity should be a better indicator since it measures both the general wealth of a country and the advanced telecommunications infrastructure needed for Internet development. Throughout the 1990s, the main method for Internet access in Latin America was over dial-up connections. A lack of telephone lines or poor quality telephone lines severely hampered Internet development in countries such as Bolivia. In fact, the problems with traditional fixed line telephone systems is seen in the dramatic growth of cellular phone usage in Latin America. For example in Venezuela by the year 2000, 21.74 per 100 people had cellular phones, while teledensity was only 10.78 fixed lines per 100 people. Observers in Latin America suggest there may be some overlap, with people who have fixed-line telephones also owning cellular phones. In the next few years we may see more alternative ways of connecting to the Internet, such as the use of cable TV or wireless services. However, the ability to connect to the Internet with these methods is still in developmental stages. For now, then, we will use

teledensity as a measurement of the general economic conditions and the telecommunications infrastructure.

Model 1 only looks at teledensity and Internet usage in Latin America. It contains the control variables and uses the special statistical techniques required by this data set.

Table 6.

Model 1 Prais-Winsten regression, correlated panels corrected standard errors (PCSEs) with correction for within-panel autocorrelation			
Number of observations = 209			
Number of groups = 19			
$R^2 = 0.7398$			
Wald chi2(3) = 1527.7700			
Prob > chi2 = 0.0000			
Variable	B (coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value
Teledensity (telem)	0.0055	0.0013	0.0000
Internet connection (netcom)	-0.0206	0.0063	0.0010
Time lag variable (tl)	0.9231	0.1785	0.0000
y-intercept	-0.1526	0.4719	0.7460
rho = 0.5873			

This model shows a strong positive association between teledensity and the estimated number of Internet users. The relationship is statistically significant at the  $p < 0.00$  level. In other words, an increase in teledensity is associated with an increase in Internet users for these Latin American countries. However, what we want to test are the effects of government policies. Thus, the second model incorporates all of our government policy variables. It also contains the control variables and uses the special statistical techniques required by this data set.

Table 7

Model 2  
Prais-Winsten regression, correlated panels corrected standard errors (PCSEs) with correction for within-panel autocorrelation

Number of observations = 209  
Number of groups = 19

	$\beta$ (coefficient)	Standard Error	p-value
Teledensity (telem)	0.0014	0.0010	0.1730
Privatization (privatm)	0.0223	0.0102	0.0290
Liberalization (openmarm)	0.0258	0.0053	0.0000
Tariffs (tarifm)	0.0643	0.0233	0.0060
Telecenters (altelem)	0.0024	0.0036	0.6680
Internet connection (neiconnm)	-0.0229	0.0068	0.0010
Time lag variable (t1)	1.0275	0.1219	0.0000
y-intercept	0.5033	0.4823	0.2970
rho = 0.4433			

The first general observation is that the statistical significance of the teledensity variable dropped dramatically. The most statistically significant variables are the market liberalization (openmarm) and the rate changes (tarifm) at p<0.01; privatization (privatm) is not that

statistically significant in this model. The p-value for telecenter policies (altelem) indicates that the variable is not statistically significant and thus we cannot be confident in the coefficient.

The second observation is that introducing the government policy variables reduces the coefficient for teledensity by more than two-thirds. This means that the teledensity's predicted effect on increasing Internet users is not as strong as the previous model indicated. Government policies have a stronger association with increased Internet usage. The tariff change variable is the strongest, followed by market liberalization, and then privatization. The weakness of the privatization variable in explaining Internet usage is logical since some countries (Uruguay and Costa Rica) have both state-owned telephone companies as well as high teledensity and Internet

Table 8. Increasing the variable by 1 may have this associated increase of Internet users per 1,000 in the year 2000

Variable	Increasing the variable by 1 may have this associated increase of Internet users per 1,000 in the year 2000
Teledensity (telem)	0.5
Privatization (privatm)	7
Liberalization (openmarm)	8
Tariffs (tarifm)	21
Telecenters (altelem)	1

The third model substitutes per capita GNI for teledensity to check that the results are not being influenced by possible overlap between teledensity and government policies to change the telecommunications infrastructure (privatization and market liberalization).

Table 9.

Model 3  
Prais-Winsten regression, correlated panels corrected standard errors (PCSEs) with correction for within-panel autocorrelation  
Number of observations = 198  
Number of groups = 18

$r^2 = 0.8094$	Wald chi2(7) = 1705.8400	Prob > chi2 = 0.0000	
Variable	B (coefficient)	Standard Error	p value
Per capita GNI, PPP (gnim)	0.0000059	0.0000024	0.0140
Privatization (privatum)	0.0174	0.0097	0.0720
Liberalization (openmarm)	0.0257	0.0054	0.0000
Tariffs (tarifm)	0.0579	0.0205	0.0050
Telecenters (altelem)	0.0039	0.0066	0.5510
Internet connection (netconn)	-0.0377	0.0126	0.0030
Time lag variable (t1)	1.0339	0.1306	0.0000
y-intercept	0.4263	0.5405	0.4300
rho = 0.4815			

This model shows that the same positive associations exist, with the two strong variables of market liberalization and tariff changes staying the same or becoming stronger. Privatization has a weaker association and telecenters has a slightly stronger association. The model demonstrates that government policies still matter. The results of Model 2 and Model 3 would support my original hypothesis that Internet usage is not strictly a function of economic development. In fact, government policies can have a dramatic effect on increasing Internet usage in Latin America.

#### Increasing Internet access: Conclusions

The data in this study confirm previous research showing the existence of a digital divide. Not only is there a gap between OECD countries and Latin American countries, but also there is a gap within Latin America over Internet access. The models and the data also indicate some general conclusions.

First, Internet use is strongly associated with a country's wealth and the development of telecommunications infrastructure. However, a country can increase Internet access and usage through specific government policies. Such access would be higher than what is normally expected for countries with similar levels of economic development. The government policy that has the strongest effect on increasing Internet access appears to be changing the tariff structure, such as creating flat-price dialing schemes. The next most effective government policy is full liberalization of the telecommunications market. Privatization may also benefit the country. In this data set, the existence of public access centers had a very small association with increase in Internet usage.

The statistical analysis and the models suggest that the Argentine and Chilean cases are not aberrations when they saw increases in Internet use after changing the rate structures. Other Latin American countries, such as Costa Rica, that implemented similar policies also saw increases in Internet usage. Thus if a government wishes to quickly and dramatically increase access to the new technologies it should reduce connection charges. This is not the only policy a government should pursue; the data suggest that liberalizing the market and perhaps privatization of the telephone company can also increase Internet access. It would be a mistake for governments in Latin America to assume that general economic growth and improvements in the telecommunications infrastructure are sufficient to bridge the digital divide.

Although these results seem to be a confirmation of intuition to some degree, they are important because many Latin American governments are in the process of rewriting their telecommunications laws and regulations. Mexico, for example, is considering a change in telephone rates that would allow companies to charge for the amount of time the telephone line is occupied. Following the results and reasoning of the models in this paper, such a policy would be detrimental to Internet expansion in that country as long as the predominant method of access was dial-up.

Future research should explore other policies, especially the effects of public access centers, as more data become available. The effects of education, literacy, and English-language proficiency would also be other factors to include if better time-series data were available for Latin America. However, the literature predicts that such a study may confirm Hargitai's findings about the overall importance of economic factors.

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**A Profile of Ugandan Journalists in the New Millennium**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The last two decades have not only witnessed increasing globalization of the mass media, but also the worldwide spread of the practices and ideologies of the western, especially the American, communication industry (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990). The current debate on globalization seems to be replacing the dominant discourse on western influences on communication in the rest of the world—colonial/postcolonial theory and the cultural imperialism thesis.

Globalization has led to a lot of convergences in media systems around the world. While a lot has been written about media content and audiences in a globalized environment, very little has been done to compare the people who work in journalism in developing countries, especially in Africa, to their counterparts in the developed countries. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute some groundwork for such comparison.

Modeled closely along previous studies of journalists in North American and Europe (e.g. Henningham and Delano, 1998; Johnstone, Slawski & Bowman, 1976; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986; 1991; 1996), it examines the sociological portrait of Ugandan journalists at the beginning of the New Millennium. In particular, the study looks at the demographics, background, job conditions, and education of news people in Uganda; their role perceptions; professional attitudes, beliefs and values; and the major constraints on journalistic freedoms in Uganda.

National portraits of journalists are important because journalism is deemed to be a central influence on society. The mass media are not only the main sources of information for a majority of people, but they also have the power to establish an agenda

on public issues which the leaders and the citizenry regard as important. Moreover, the media can also play an important watchdog role that can increase the accountability of the state to the citizenry, which, some say, is even more critical to democratic sustainability than participation. However, the media can only play these noble roles if they are credible, and can provide reliable information about the state and its sociopolitical environment. They cannot rise up to the challenges of democratic participation and sustainability if journalists do not have the wherewithal, knowledge, skills and freedom required to investigate all matters of public concern. That is why it is very important for us to have a sense of the people who work in journalism, more so in countries such as Uganda, where the democratization process remains shaky. An appreciation of the role of journalism and the media in societies undergoing democratic transitions cannot be complete without an understanding of the people who work in this important institution that has been christened the “fourth estate.”

As Weaver (1998) succinctly puts it:

The major assumption is that journalists’ backgrounds and ideas have some relationship to what is reported (and how it is covered) in the various news media around the world, in spite of various societal and organizational constraints, and that this news coverage matters in terms of world public opinion and policies (1998, p.2).

In Uganda, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, this study is especially important because of the role of journalism in the transition to democracy in the 1990s. Uganda has gone through some of the worst political and economic chaos anywhere in the world. However, in the 1990s, the success of macroeconomic stabilization and sustained economic growth, coupled with relative sociopolitical stability, and some modest gains in the provision of social services led international observers to declare the country a

“success story in Africa” (Uganda Human Development Report, 1998). The fortunes of Ugandan journalism and the media very much reflect the country’s troubled post-independence history as well as recent political and economic transformations, which have come against the backdrop of international developments following the end of the Cold War. While independent journalism was not tolerated in the past, the sociopolitical transformations of the 1990s saw the proliferation of private newspapers and broadcasting stations, as well as a relative degree of press freedom (Ogundimu, 1996; Robbins, 1997).

The results of this study provide the first comprehensive portrait of journalists in this East African country, and they come at a time when the country is still undergoing wide-ranging political and economic changes.

### **UGANDA: POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

The East African territory that came to be known as Uganda was declared a British Protectorate in 1894 and remained a British colony until political independence in October 1962. Before the advent of colonial rule, European explorers and missionaries had penetrated the region, home of some of the most powerful kingdoms in eastern and central Africa.

After independence, the new African rulers soon turned the guns on their own people. Post-independence Uganda has been what Mutiibwa (1992) describes as a story of “unfulfilled promises.” The greater part of this period has been a story of human tragedy, political upheaval and economic stagnation.

By the time the current President, Yoweri Museveni, took power in 1986 after a five-year guerrilla war, Uganda had gone through some of the worst political and economic

chaos anywhere in the world. More than 300,000 Ugandans had been killed in political violence since 1971 when dictator Idi Amin took power. The economy had been shattered by unending political instability, civil war and mismanagement. At about U.S. \$180, Uganda's per capita GDP was one of the lowest in the world.

Calling his takeover a "fundamental change," Museveni promised to restore personal freedoms and ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the people (Mutiibwa, 1992). With the support of the World Bank and IMF, Museveni has vigorously pushed for the liberalization of the economy and privatization of most state enterprises. The 1990s saw Uganda registering some of the fastest growth rates in the world. The country also made significant progress in fostering democratic governance.

However, the majority of the country's predominantly rural population is yet to enjoy the benefits of the impressive national growth figures. Forty-three percent of the population is still classified as poor. Thomas Babatunde, the former UNDP Resident Representative in Uganda, sums it up well:

Despite ... commendable achievements, however, Uganda still exhibits two faces—on the one hand there is impressive economic performance as indicated by key macroeconomic indicators, and on the other there is abject poverty manifested by pervasive human deprivation, vulnerability and inadequate social services (Uganda Human Development Report, 1998, p.i).

Moreover, an equally liberal political environment has not followed the economic liberalization of the 1990s. In 1995, Uganda adopted a new constitution that entrenched the so-called Movement political system under which political party activity is banned in favor of "individual merit" in public elections. Whereas Western donor nations still consider this a blotch on the country's democratization process, they have so far given Museveni the benefit of the doubt. His government is hailed for establishing peace and

security in a large part of the country and for restoring the rule of law, respect for human rights, as well as relative freedom of the press.

### **UGANDA: CHANGING MEDIA CONTEXT**

African politics and identities have been strongly influenced by pre-colonial traditions, colonial legacies and the crisis of the post-colonial state (Werbner and Ranger, 1996). As Eribo and Jong-Ebot (1997) suggest, "each 'departing' colonial power left its indelible imprint or colonial 'habits of mind' which are visible today among the continent's rulers, people, institutions and actions" (p.xii).

The press and broadcasting in Africa are colonial inventions. Britain particularly played a dominant role here. As Asante (1996) points out, "the whole notion of media development and use (in Africa) was essentially Western in orientation" (p.xxv). Tunstall (1977) suggests that British-style media were imposed on the former colonies of Britain in Africa.

The press was established for the use of British businessmen, settlers, teachers, government officials and soldiers...As with the press, broadcasting was set up to appeal mainly to the British themselves. Inevitably, then, the media were set up to appeal to a foreign elite; inevitably also not only equipment such as transmitters and printing presses were imported, but so also were media models such as the serious daily newspaper. So also was material—news, entertainment, and advertising (p.108).

The precursors of the press in Uganda were 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary publications, which were first meant as a medium of information for missionaries in the country and those on leave at home. They were, however, later published in indigenous languages to disseminate church-related information to natives (Robbins, 1997). The 1950s saw a proliferation of African-owned news publications in Uganda. This coincided with the peak of African opposition to the colonial establishment.

The fact that the press in Uganda was largely a European creation left its mark on the country's newspapers even after independence (Ainslie, 1967). The media in post-colonial Africa were involved in what Tunstall (1977) called "only a modification of the new 'white-press phase'" (p.111). Today, the front pages of Uganda's mainstream newspapers are not unlike British national tabloids, while the new private FM stations have not only borrowed American-style programming, but also 80 percent of their programs are imported from North America and Western Europe (Ogundimu, 1996).

In addition, Uganda inherited the British tradition of journalism apprenticeship. In the colonial period, journalism training was mainly acquiring technical skills on the job or on short overseas courses (Katzen, 1975, p.166). In any case, the African press in the colonial period was to a large extent an advocacy press that required commitment to nationalist causes more than professional skills in journalism (Boafo, 1988). Thus, formal media training in Uganda, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa was a post-independence phenomenon.

Normative theories of media performance suggest that the media are not only a "product" and a "reflection" of the history of their own societies, but they also play a part in that history (McQuail, 1994, p. 121). Bourgault (1995) puts it succinctly:

"The history of journalism in [sub-Saharan Africa] in the 1970s and 1980s is a history of a continent coming to grips with the contradictions in which it found itself. It is a history of the struggle for the newly independent nations to forge a national consciousness among disparate ethnic groups. It is a history of elite policy makers who had clamored for independence trying now to shore up the newly found freedoms. It is a history of politicians discovering that political freedom from the colonial masters had been easier to achieve than economic prosperity. It is a history, in fact, of the failure of the nation-state and the modernist paradigm to satisfy the hopes of African peoples, elites as well as masses, urbanites as well as rural dwellers" (p.176).

Communication practice in post-colonial Africa became predicated on the premise that the mass media were important for political integration, mobilization, national unity and economic development in the new nations. It was assumed that exposure to "modern" values through the mass media would change behavior and attitudes which would in turn create new agents of economic growth and development in "traditional" societies. Therefore, the mass media were to be used to foster the values and development objectives of the governments of the new independent nations (Hachten, 1992).

Government officials repeatedly called on journalists to disregard the kind of critical, hard-hitting, no-holds-barred reporting seen in the Western press. Alex Ojera, information minister in the first post-independence Ugandan government, summed it up thus in 1966:

Perverse criticism is a brake on progress and frustrates the authorities of the people interested in development (quoted in Wilcox, 1975, p.25).

African leaders in general expressed four major attitudes about the role and function of the press in independent Africa: (1) "harnessing the press for nation-building, which consists of creating a national consciousness and unity within a heterogeneous people; (2) the press as an instrument of national unity; (3) the need for 'constructive' criticism; and (4) the press as an agent of mass education" (Wilcox, 1975, p.24).

Press freedom was often circumscribed in the name of achieving national objectives. Official newspapers and state-owned and controlled electronic broadcasting dotted the post-independence media landscape in Uganda. The media were often subservient to the interests of ruling parties, and independent journalism was not tolerated.

According to Tatarian (1978), the rationale of Third World governments was less tolerant or less understanding of the need to illuminate “dark spots.”

The official argument was that many young states were still too fragile, too deficient in literacy and established institutions, and their people more loyal to racial, religious, or tribal communities than to the new concept of statehood, to risk the controversy and confrontation produced by the full exercise of personal freedoms. The Third World journalist is thus advised not to try to emulate the probing, investigative role of the Western journalist until his own society attains the cohesion and common purpose of the more highly developed countries (p.43).

However, the motives for African governments’ direction of the mass media were not always, if at all, altruistic. The media ended up being used to legitimize what were in most cases ruthless dictatorships (Barton, 1979).

In the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and a new focus in international political discourse on issues of good governance and human rights, the view that the mass media best play a positive role in society when they are independent and can be seen as credible channels of information and public debate took center stage. Free and independent media have been identified as crucial components not only in the strengthening of civil society, but also in maintenance of political stability (Blair, 1998; Hadenius & Uggla, 1998).

In Uganda, the 1990s saw a remarkable proliferation of freewheeling private newspapers, the liberalization of broadcasting, as well as increasing professionalism in the media. In fact, Uganda is often cited as an “exciting” example of a vibrant free press in East Africa. (De Beer et al, 1995; Robbins, 1997). Robbins (1997) suggests “the diversity of ownership and range of topics covered [in the Ugandan media] seems to speak well of official tolerance and openness both to an independent press and to the winds of democracy said to be blowing across the continent” (p.125).

In spite of these developments, the country's media continue to battle against the government's entrenched penchant for stifling criticism. While overt political controls on the media are shrinking, media-government relations are still fraught with a lot of tension. Besides, the media still have to surmount often-draconian legislation in order to operate (Onyango-Obbo, 1996; Oloka-Onyango, 1996; Robbins, 1997).

Moreover, economic roadblocks against a viable press remain. These include a poor advertising base due to low levels of investment, low purchasing power due to poverty, and a poor transport and distribution network. Illiteracy and the predominance of the oral tradition have compounded the woes of Ugandan publishers. Thus, newspapers continue to be the preserve of a small urban middle class, while radio remains the predominant mass medium not only because it is cheap, but also because it plays right into the oral tradition prevalent in most African countries.

This is clearly a rich context within which to examine the sociological portrait of Ugandan journalists. For instance, how do these journalists perceive their roles within an African context that has been influenced by pre-colonial traditions, colonialism, the post-colonial crisis and recent global trends?

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the demographics, background and education of Ugandan journalists?
2. What are the role perceptions of Ugandan journalists? That is, how do they rate various news media functions? How do these role perceptions compare to those of western journalists?
3. What are the professional attitudes, beliefs and values of Ugandan journalists? How do these compare to those of western journalists?

4. What are the major constraints to journalistic freedoms in Uganda?
5. How (if at all) has the portrait of Uganda journalists changed over time?

## **METHODS**

This study relies on primary data from a national survey of Ugandan journalists conducted between June and August 2001. By the time of the study, the total number of Ugandan journalists was about 550. Estimates of the national population of Ugandan journalists were obtained from the registry of the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda, the Media Council, and staff lists of journalists from all newspapers and broadcasting stations.

A systematic random sample was obtained by choosing every fourth person on the alphabetical master list of journalists. The researcher visited almost all newspapers and broadcasting stations in Kampala, and delivered self-administered questionnaires mostly in person to the selected 140 journalists. Questionnaires for journalists who worked outside Kampala were delivered by mail. Of the 140 questionnaires sent out, 101 had been returned by August, making a decent response rate of 72 percent.

As already mentioned, this survey was modeled along national studies of British journalists done by Henningham & Delano (1998), and U.S. journalists by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1976), and Weaver and Wilhoit (1986; 1996). The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions. In most cases, the questions were similar to Weaver and Wilhoit's questionnaire, although some questions were designed to take the different contexts in which journalism is practiced into consideration (see appendix).

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION<sup>1</sup>**

### **Demographics, Background and Work**

A majority of the respondents were male (73%), with a median age of 31 and a median journalism experience of seven years. Less than half (43%) of the respondents were married, while 52% said they had been brought up as Protestants. Over two-thirds of the respondents indicated they were "independent" or had no political affiliation.

Forty-seven percent of the respondents had graduated from university, while 33% had graduated from some other tertiary institution. Only 13% reported having no tertiary education. Of those who graduated from university or tertiary institutions, 59% majored in journalism. This appears to suggest Ugandans place a lot of importance on journalism training in the university setting. In fact, 56% of the respondents thought journalists should have a university degree.

Sixty percent of the respondents worked in the print press, while 39% were in broadcasting. Despite the recent proliferation of private newspapers and radio stations, 60% of the respondents worked for government-owned media, while 36% reported working for private media. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (92%) work in the nation's capital, Kampala.<sup>2</sup> Slightly over half of the respondents (51%) said their main responsibility was reporting or newsgathering. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents belonged to at least one professional association.

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<sup>1</sup> The author is still working on more sophisticated statistical analyses. For instance, it is hoped that regression analysis will be useful in identifying predictors of important dependent variables such as job satisfaction, perceptions of media functions, and views on ethical issues.

<sup>2</sup> Uganda has no tradition of community or local media, but the recent proliferation of private radio stations promises to see more rural radio.

While two thirds of the respondents reported using the Internet in their work at least several times a week, a significant 24% said they did not use it all. Most of these cited "limited" or complete "lack of access" as the main reason they were not online.

### **Press Freedom, Professional Autonomy and Freedom**

It would appear that Ugandan journalists work under conditions of relative professional autonomy and freedom. To measure professional autonomy and freedom, journalists who do reporting regularly or occasionally were asked about their clout in proposing stories, their freedom to select stories they work on and to decide which aspects should be emphasized, as well as how much editing their stories received.

Those who said they "almost always" could get a story covered, if they thought it should be followed up, were 45%. Another 29% said they were successful "more often than not," while 22% were able to get stories covered only occasionally. A negligible 4% did not make such proposals. In other words, at the very least almost three-quarters of the respondents have their proposals approved more often than not.

The numbers were not as good for freedom in selecting stories to work on. Just 33% reported having "almost complete freedom," 35% had "a great deal of freedom," while 29% said they had "some freedom." Four percent reported having no freedom at all. Still, over two thirds of the respondents reported having at the very least a great deal of freedom.

Asked about their freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized, only 26% reported having "almost complete freedom," 41% had "a great deal of freedom," while 27% said they had "some freedom." Six percent reported having

no freedom at all. Again, taken together over two thirds of the respondents report having at least a great deal of freedom.

However, fewer journalists (13%) reported having their stories not edited by others at their organizations. An overwhelming majority of 75% said their stories got “some editing” from other people, while 12% said they received “a great deal” of editing.

Considering the context within which they work, it would appear that Ugandan journalists enjoy a fair amount of professional autonomy and freedom. However, a majority of the respondents rated press freedom in Uganda as only moderate. Using a press freedom scale where 0 means “no press freedom” and 10 means “absolute freedom,” respondents scored an average of 6. This rating seems to be supported by recent studies on the Ugandan media, which have suggested that while there have been improvements in the 1990s, press freedom in Uganda remains at the mercy of those in power (Onyango-Obbo, 1996; Oloka-Onyango, 1996; Robbins, 1997). Robbins sums it up thus: “Uganda’s press freedom continues to be fragile, although the tightrope that its journalists walk is perhaps thicker than in some other African countries” (p.132).

Almost a third of the respondents cited official laws such as sedition and criminal libel as the most significant limits to their journalistic freedoms. Other limits cited by a significant percentage of respondents included self censorship due to government ownership of the media, lack of access to information, as well as political interference and harassment by state agents.

A majority of journalists denounced the current laws governing the media, such as those on sedition, criminal libel, and the publication of false news as “draconian” and

"archaic," and called for their immediate repeal. A middle-aged producer at the government-owned Uganda Television captured the sentiment thus:

We don't need such laws. We need to build a strong media institution that will regulate itself with as little government interference as possible, but with the media guarding against excessiveness.

A feature writer at a daily newspaper said, "The Ugandan laws appear to have been conceived in bad faith," while a news editor at a Kampala FM station was more blunt: "They are archaic and should be repealed immediately." A news editor at another FM station said, "Many of the laws are intended to safeguard the political interests of those in power." A sub-editor at a daily said, "These laws are bad and should be scrapped because they frustrate or intimidate journalists. Civil laws should be invoked to protect those injured by professional flaws."

Despite their yearning for more freedom, however, most Ugandan journalists would appear to be receptive to some forms of controls and regulation on the media. Thus, 70% of the respondents said there were circumstances when limits on access to information were justified. Of these, 77% cited national security as an area where such limitations were tolerable, while 15% mentioned privacy.

Compared to results of surveys of journalists in Europe and North America, the foregoing section on press freedom tells us that just like their counterparts in the West, Ugandan journalists would like to operate in a freer atmosphere. While they recognize the imperative of national security and privacy as legitimate justifications for limits to press freedom, it would appear that they still feel that the current landscape limits them in the performance of their public roles.

### **Importance of Job Aspects, and Satisfaction**

It would appear that in rating jobs in journalism, a majority of Ugandan journalists rate material, professional, and public affairs benefits as very important. Here the study relied on a professional values scale used by Johstone et al. and Weaver and Wilhoit. Nine items measuring job benefits were factor analyzed using principal axis factoring with varimax rotation (see Table 2). Three distinct factors emerged. The first factor contained the perceived importance of "pay," "fringe benefits," "job security," and the "chance to get ahead in the organization." This could be called the material benefits cluster. The second factor included the perceived importance of the "chance to influence public affairs," the "chance to help people," and "organizational editorial policies." This could be considered the public affairs benefits cluster. The last factor included the perceived importance of "autonomy" and the "chance to develop a specialty," and could be called the professional benefits cluster.<sup>3</sup>

All factors were rated above average in importance. Material benefits had a mean of 4.14, public affairs benefits 4.17 and professional benefits 4.14.

It would appear that a significant number of Ugandan journalists do not plan on staying in the profession much longer. Thus, while a majority of respondents said they would remain in the news media (64%), a substantial percentage (33%) reported that they would be working outside the media in five years' time. Poor pay, exploring other opportunities, as well as stress and exhaustion, were some of the most frequently cited reasons for quitting journalism.

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<sup>3</sup> The reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the scale for items loading on the first factor was .658. The alpha for the second factor was .500, while the alpha for the last factor was considerably low at .398.

A young reporter who plans to go into public relations said, "In Uganda, the news media are not fully professional, they are constrained by [official] laws, and there is gross underpayment. I deserve more." A program assistant at Radio Uganda added, "The media industry is becoming vibrant but with little press freedom. Journalists are still marginalized and paid poorly." A news editor at a private FM station sounded more frustrated: "I have had enough of journalism. There has been no improvement in my professional career, on top of poor pay."

That a high number of journalists plan to defect from the media should perhaps not be surprising, considering that 40% of the respondents said they were either "somewhat" or "very dissatisfied" with their current jobs. Only 6% said they were "very satisfied," while 55% said they were "fairly satisfied." Poor pay, a frustrating bureaucracy, as well difficulties with management were some of the most frequently cited reasons for job dissatisfaction. As in many other parts of the word, journalism is not that lucrative in Uganda. About two thirds of the respondents said they had earned under five million shillings (US \$2900) the previous year, while 21% earned between five and eleven million. Only 14% earned over Shs. 11 million (US \$6400) a year.

Journalists who work with the government owned radio and television appeared to be more likely to be dissatisfied because of bureaucracy and what they considered bad attitudes from their supervisors. A news editor at Radio Uganda said, "There are a lot of malicious, envious, retrogressive and mediocre old guards bent on frustrating efforts of progressive journalists." A manager with a government radio station said, "The structures of the government broadcast media are irrational and frustrating to many professionals." A senior TV producer said he was very dissatisfied because of "lack of editorial

independence, very little pay and limited opportunities to get ahead." A producer at a radio station said, "The pay is miserable and the [supervisors'] attitude is not encouraging," while a sub-editor at a daily lamented what he called "oppressive editorial policy, and working under incompetent bosses who ignore professional ideas for political reasons."

Of those who want to quit the media, 21% said they would most likely work in public relations in the next five years, another 21% plan to go into teaching and research, 18% plan on going into private business, while another 18% would like to work for non-government organizations or nonprofits.

Women were both more likely to say they were dissatisfied ( $p=.038$ ) and that they intended to quit the media ( $p=.002$ ) than men. It appears that journalism is a demanding and stressful profession that is not likely to retain high percentages of women in societies where they are still expected to play a major domestic role, and where opportunities for the professional advancement of women are still limited.

It is not all gloom, however. It is encouraging that some of the most frequent reasons cited by those who are committed to journalism were the public affairs benefits of their jobs, such as editorial independence, and impact on people/public affairs. Thus, the editor of a rural-based newspaper said, "I am satisfied with working in the rural area, influencing the lives of ordinary people, and the fair amount of autonomy I have." Added a young reporter with a daily newspaper: "I am very satisfied because I like the editorial policies, I am very autonomous and independent in my work, and I have also helped people and influenced public affairs."

### **Perceptions of Media Functions**

As their counterparts in the West, it would appear that Ugandan journalists tend to support both information and investigative roles of the news media (see Table 3). The study applied a 13-item scale devised by Johnstone et al. (1976) and developed by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) to rate journalists' views on media functions.<sup>4</sup>

Getting information out quickly to the public, investigating government claims, analysis and interpretation, as well as discussion of national policy before it is developed were all rated as very important functions of the news media. Getting information out quickly was rated highest (86%), followed by giving ordinary people a chance to express themselves (80%), investigating government claims (75%) and providing analysis and interpretation (63%).

However, Ugandan journalists were less likely to support the "adversarial role" of the news media. Thus, only 14% of the respondents thought it was "extremely important" that the news media should be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions, and 11% felt journalists should be an adversary, in the same sense, of business.

Those who argue that the African press is tied a conceptualization of journalism that is not questioning of official authority (e.g. Roser & Brown, 1986) would perhaps use this as evidence to support their case. Yet, the Ugandan figures are not that different from data from the United States where only 21% thought it was "very important" that the news media should be an adversary of public officials, and only 14% felt the same about business (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996, p.136). British journalists were much more

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<sup>4</sup> Unlike Weaver & Wilhoit's study, a factor analysis of the 13-items did not produce clear-cut clusters of media functions.

likely to support the adversarial role. Thus, Henningham & Delano (1998) found that 51% of British journalists believed it was “extremely important” that the news media should be an adversary of public officials whereas 45% believed journalists should be an adversary of business (pp. 152-153).

It is not clear what explains this difference from the British and similarity to American journalists. One could argue that it is because of the influence of American journalism training on the Ugandan curriculum. This would make sense especially considering that Ugandan respondents cited journalistic training as the strongest influence on journalists’ concepts of what was newsworthy (see Table 4). Over half the respondents (52%) rated it as very influential. The next biggest influence was supervisors (30%). Yet, on other functions, as Table 4 shows, the Uganda results were closer to the British figures.

Whatever the case, overall, it appears that Ugandan journalists rate highly what Ramaprasad (2001) has called Western journalistic functions. Tanzanian journalists also rated these functions highly.

Some African scholars are concerned by this reflection of Western conceptualization of journalism. Kasoma (1996), for instance, argues:

The tragedy facing African journalism of the 1990s and beyond...is that the continent’s journalists have closely imitated the professional norms of the (West), which they see as the epitome of good journalism. Consequently, the African mass media’s philosophical foundations, their aims and objectives have been blue-prints of the media in the industrialized societies of the (West)” (p.95).

Certainly African journalism has been influenced by the West. However, it may well be that the closeness of African professional practices to those of the West represents a gradual move toward the rise of journalism as a global profession. Splichal

and Sparks (1994), who surveyed 1,800 first-year journalism students in 22 different countries thought so, although others have challenged this view (Weaver, 1998a).

### **Influences on Ethics and Views on Controversial Practices**

The biggest influences on journalism ethics were day-by-day newsroom learning, followed by journalism teachers, a senior editor and family upbringing. Seventy-one percent rated day-by-day newsroom learning as extremely influential, 53% said the same about journalism teachers, while 51% said so about a senior editor (see Table 5). On average, religious training, publishers, and high school teachers did not appear to be very strong influences on journalism ethics.

As for views on journalism ethics, the results gave a mixed picture. Again, ethical stances were arrived at using a 10-item scale developed by Weaver & Wilhoit (1996). Four additional items that are unique to this study were added on the scale. Respondents were asked, "Given an important story, which one of the following methods do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve under any circumstances?" In half the cases, a majority of Ugandan journalists were likely to respond that controversial or questionable reporting practices "may be justified" (see Table 6. Thus 66% of the respondents said they would approve of paying people for confidential information, 70% said they would use confidential business or government documents without authorizations, 73% said they would use hidden microphones and cameras, and 55% said they would badger unwilling informants for a story.

While these practices may be questionable, they may indeed appear justifiable for journalists who work in an environment of impenetrable bureaucracies and severe lack of access to information.

Again, overall, the Ugandan results do not show remarkable differences from those of the British. However, it was disturbing that 75% of the Ugandan respondents said being paid by a news source to facilitate information-gathering process might be justified on occasion. This question was included because this practice appears to be widespread in Uganda. It read: "Do you think it may be justified on occasion or would you not approve under any circumstances a journalist being PAID by a source to facilitate the information gathering process without attempting to influence the direction of a story?" Some will argue that it is perhaps understandable, considering that Ugandan journalists earn very little and are not adequately supported by their organizations. But there is a danger that news sources will end up unduly influencing media coverage. Moreover, Ugandan media organizations do employ ombudsmen who could act as internal checks on unethical behavior.

The good news is over 90% of the respondents said they would not approve being paid by a source to publish, kill or change a story to reflect the wishes of the news source. Again, this question was included because of the prevalence of complaints about Ugandan journalists taking money from news sources either to publish or kill stories.

It is also worrying that unlike their counterparts in the West, a whole 21% of the Ugandan respondents said they would break confidentiality agreements with sources. This is intriguing considering that confidentiality of sources is even recognized in the official code of ethics of Ugandan journalists, which is part of the press law of 1995.

Commenting about ethical practices in the United Kingdom, Hennigham and Delano (1998) argue that "the strongly competitive newsgathering environment ...may result in a culture in which ethical constraints are somewhat blurred. The relative recency

of professional education in journalism may be another factor, together with the lack of a tradition of associations of journalists organized on purely professional lines" (p.157).

In Uganda, where access to official information remains a major constraint, journalists may find it easier to justify questionable information gathering and reporting practices. Moreover, as we have already noted, formal journalism training in Uganda, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa is a recent phenomenon. On the other hand, politics, economics, and wrangling have hindered the development of strong professional journalism associations in Uganda.

It is telling that in the U.S., where there has been a strong tradition of journalism education, and a strong culture of professional associations, journalists appear less likely to approve of certain questionable reporting practices (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996) than the British or Ugandans.

### CONCLUSION

Before drawing conclusions, it is important to remember that there are no previous national studies of Ugandan journalists to compare with. Secondly, while the sample of 101 journalists is a significant percentage of the entire population of Ugandan journalists, we are bound to run into problems of a large sampling error. Therefore, we should be careful not to overstretch the significance of the results of this study. Yet, we can make several important conclusions.

It appears that Ugandan journalists are far more likely to possess university education today than in the first decades after independence. This is perhaps due to the growing sophistication of the market place, and the importance attached to formal education. However, compared to journalists from developed countries such as Britain, it

would appear that Ugandan journalists appear to overrate the importance of university education to journalism.

As the British and Americans, Ugandan journalists appeared to be likely to approve of several controversial reporting practices such as paying for confidential information or badgering unwilling informants. While in the West this is mostly blamed on competitive pressures, it may well be that in countries such as Uganda where access to official information remains a major struggle journalists cannot help embracing controversial ways of getting stories.

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are several structural differences in the context in which journalism is practiced in the West and in Uganda. Some of those differences appear to have an influence on the portrait of Ugandan journalists. Thus, more Ugandan journalists work for government-owned media, and are constrained more by political strictures ranging from draconian official laws to direct political interference.

It should also be a cause of concern that a significant number of journalists plan to defect from the profession in the next few years. The profession would benefit more if the retention rates were high so that new generations of journalists could learn from the experience and wisdom of the veterans.

The good news is that despite the constraints under which they work, Ugandan journalists showed a commitment to the public affairs benefits of their jobs. Moreover, despite the infringements on press freedom, Ugandan journalists believed they had considerable professional freedom and autonomy.

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that Ugandan news people highly value the so-called western journalistic functions of information, analysis and

interpretation, and investigation of official claims. Some have argued that African journalists are still beholden to the notion of development journalism that was prevalent in the 1970s. This study did not ask questions about journalism and national development. However, it appears reasonable to conclude that Ugandan journalists do not see themselves as working for the patronizing outlets that development journalism inevitably led to. Rather, they seem to have embraced a conceptualization of independent journalism at the core of which is information, analysis, interpretation and giving ordinary people a voice.

It is not clear whether support for these western-type role perceptions is a result of the enduring colonial legacy, universal conventions on the place of journalism in society, or the gradual development of global professional journalistic practices. It appears however, that with the end of the Cold War, a western conceptualization of journalism, at least in as far as it provides information, investigates claims by government, and gives ordinary people a voice, is taking hold in the rest of the world.

The Uganda survey also shows that the threats to independent journalism in developing countries do not appear to stem from the profession itself, but rather from the ruling class. As Lee (1991) argues, the question of whether a free press is incompatible with development is either "insufficient" or an "ideological" one favoring the position of the ruling elite.

It is not inherently an either-or question. The two values, national development and freedom of the press, can be pursued simultaneously, if so desired. The question itself, however, has been routinely formulated by power elites in developing countries in such a way as to imply that it is necessary or even inevitable to sacrifice freedom of the press at least during the period of modernization (Lee, 1991, p.157).

Uganda journalists would no doubt agree with this argument, but some of the power elite would probably have a different take.

Of course, we can speculate only so much. There is need for further study to explore further some of the major findings in this study.

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**Table 1. Uganda: Selected Indicators**

Population (millions)	23.9
Life expectancy at birth (years)	43.3
Literacy rate (%)	67
Official Language	English
Government type	"No-Party" system
GDP (US\$)	26.2 billion
GDP per capita: purchasing power parity (US\$)	1,100
Population below poverty line(%)	46
Telephone mainlines per 1000	02
Mobile telephone subscribers	60,000
Radio broadcast stations	AM 4; FM 19
Radio sets per 1000 people	123
Television broadcast stations	06
Television sets per 1000 people	26
Average daily newspaper circulation	90,000
Internet penetration (%)	0.2
Personal computers per 1000	0.5

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2001; World Development Report, 1999/2000

**Table 2. Ugandan journalists: Factor Analysis of Journalism Job benefits**

	Mean	Factors		
		I	II	III
<b>Material Benefits</b>	<b>4.15</b>			
Pay	4.17	.530		
Fringe benefits	3.59	.610		
Job security	4.61	.580		
Chance to get ahead in the organization	4.21	.613		
<b>Public Affairs Benefits</b>	<b>4.17</b>			
Editorial policies of the organization	4.50		.414	
Chance to help people	3.78		.539	
Chance to influence public affairs	4.21		.539	
<b>Professional Benefits</b>	<b>4.14</b>			
Chance to develop a specialty	4.06			.437
Amount of autonomy you have	4.21			.564

Note: The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with a higher score associated with greater importance.

**Table 3. Uganda, British and U.S. Journalists: Importance of News Media Functions**

	Percentage saying "extremely/Very important"		
	Ugandan Journalists (N=101)	British Journalists (N=726)	U.S. journalists (N=1156)
Get information to the public quickly	86	88	69
Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems	63	83	48
Provide entertainment and relaxation	32	47	14
Investigate claims and statements made by the government	75	88	67
Stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified	32	30	49
Concentrate on news which is of interest to the widest possible audience	55	45	20
Discuss national policy while it is still being developed	50	64	39
Develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public	44	30	18
Be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions	14	51	21
Be an adversary of businesses by being constantly skeptical of their actions	11	45	14
Set the political agenda	32	13	05
Influence public opinion	37	—	—
Give ordinary people a chance to express themselves	80	56	—

Source of British and American data: Henningham and Delano (1998:153)

**Table 4. Ugandan Journalists: Influences on Newsworthiness**

	Percentage saying "very influential" (N=101)
Peers	12
Supervisors	30
Friends	05
Journalistic training	52
Audience research	24
News sources	14
Prestige newspapers	15
Local competing media	13
Wire service budgets	09
Public opinion polls	12

**Table 5. Ugandan Journalists: Influences on Journalism Ethics**

	Percentage saying "extremely influential" (N=101)
High School teachers	10
University teachers, other than journalism teachers	25
Journalism teachers	53
Family upbringing	37
Religious training	20
Day-by-day newsroom learning	71
A senior reporter	34
A senior editor	51
Publishers, owners or general managers	19

**Table 6. Ugandan, British and U.S. Journalists: Views on Ethical Issues**

	Percentage saying "justified on occasion"		
	Ugandan Journalists (N=101)	British Journalists (N=726)	U.S. Journalists (N=1156)
Paying people for confidential information	66	65	20
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	70	86	82
Claiming to be somebody else	29	47	22
Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so	21	09	05
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	55	59	49
Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	33	49	48
Getting employed in a firm or organization to get inside information	53	80	63
Using hidden microphones or cameras	73	73	60
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	39	78	28
Disclosing the names of rape victims	10	11	43
Being paid by a source to facilitate information gathering process	75		

Source of British and American data: Henningham and Delano (1998:157)

**The Media & Foreign Affairs: A Comparative Content Analysis of *The New York Times'* Coverage of Zaire.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Most studies of western media coverage of Africa have decried the so-called negative portrayals of the continent, and the media's focus on sensational stories on violence, natural disasters, famine, disease and so on (Domatob, 1994; Mills, 1998; Pratt, 1980; Terrell, 1989; Ungar & Gergen, 1991). While there is compelling evidence of such coverage of Africa, it would be a gross generalization to argue that all countries in the region receive the same type of coverage in the western media. Several factors beyond the traditional journalistic elements of newsworthiness such as drama and conflict influence coverage not only of Africa but other regions as well. Some of these factors include trade and economics, telecommunications infrastructure and traffic, population, and above all the foreign policy of western governments (El Zein & Cooper, 1992; Mills, 1998).

This paper mainly focuses on the last factor above. Several studies have concluded that American media depict foreign countries and international events in ways congruent with the U.S. government's foreign policy (Bennett, 1990; Dickson, 1992; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Lee & Yang, 1995; Solomon, 1992). This study attempts to enrich discourse in this area by using empirical evidence of news coverage of a country where there have been clear shifts in American government policy over the last two decades or so. Specifically, the study analyzes *The New York Times'* coverage of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in two different periods, 1978 and 1996-97. In both periods, the government of President Mobutu Sese Seko faced intense internal armed opposition. In the earlier period, the U.S. government supported the Zairian government, which was a major ally in the Cold War, while in

the 1990s, the American government had abandoned its "soft" approach to Zaire and put pressure on Mobutu's government to institute political reforms and restore respect for human rights.

The purpose of the study is to establish whether trends in *The New York Times'* coverage were related to the trends in U.S. foreign policy toward Zaire. Particularly, the study investigates whether the portrayal of the Zairian leader and government were favorable during the period when the U.S. government pursued a favorable foreign policy to that African country. It also examines the portrayal of armed groups fighting the Zairian government during the two periods.

The two periods covered in this study are particularly significant because they were both characterized by armed conflict in the vast central African country, and they attracted a lot of coverage in the U.S. media. When an armed rebellion broke out in the mineral-rich Zairian province of Shaba in 1978, it was at a time when the U.S. government pursued a favorable policy toward Zaire, which remained one of the biggest recipients of U.S. foreign aid in Africa. At that time and during most of the Cold war, the U.S. government supported Zaire's government as a bulwark against communism and turned a blind eye to Mobutu's dictatorship, human rights abuses and corruption. In 30 years, the United States gave Zaire over US \$2 billion in economic and military aid, much of which Mobutu stacked away in Swiss bank accounts or used to buy chateaux in Europe, while his country decayed (Young, 1978; 1982; Young and Turner, 1985).

Almost 10 years later, what started as an isolated rebellion in eastern Zaire in September 1996 turned into a nation-wide armed uprising against Mobutu, who had ruled the country for over 30 years. By this time the Cold War was over, and a "wind

of change" was said to be blowing across Africa. The U.S. government had changed its policy toward the African country, and had been putting pressure on Mobutu to carry out political reforms (Lief & Pasternak, 1993; Weismann, 1997).

How did *The New York Times* cover Zaire in these two periods? The study specifically examines sources of news accounts on Zaire, as well as the image of the Zairian leader, and the image of the armed groups fighting his government in the two periods. To establish U.S. government relations to Zaire, the study gives a brief background based on comments of administration officials, foreign policy commentaries and essays, as well as historical accounts of the relationship.

#### **BACKGROUND: ZAIRE AND U.S. RELATIONS**

Zaire has had a troubled history since independence from Belgium in 1960. Nearly 40 years since independence, this vast central African country that should have been one of Africa's richest countries, has been reduced to one of the world's poorest. At the heart of the country's problems has been a troubled colonial past, lack of democracy and government corruption (Young and Turner, 1985).

The United States has played a big role in Zaire's post-independence politics. Joseph Mobutu, then an army general, seized power in a military coup on Nov. 25, 1965 with American backing, and some say direct participation by the CIA (Weismann, 1997, p.37; Young, 1982). Mobutu, who renamed the country Zaire and renounced his "European" name to become Mobutu Sese Seko, abolished political parties before establishing his own Popular Movement for Revolution, through which he maintained a tight grip on the nation for the next 30 years, often holding it together by repression and terror (Young, 1982; Young and Turner, 1985).

For a better part of his rule, Mobutu remained a close ally of the United States, and the West generally. The U.S. wanted a "strongman" in Zaire who could keep the strategically important country from falling into the hands of the communists (Sahnoun, 1997, p.58; Young, 1982). According to Brian Atwood, former head of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

There isn't any question that we poured a lot of money into Zaire...We invested money during the Cold War that wasn't for development purposes...When we started investing foreign aid money in Zaire, it had a per capita income of something like \$1600 per person. It now (1996) has a per capita income of under \$200. The investment of over \$2 billion of American foreign aid served no purpose because you had essentially a corrupt government that wasn't accountable to its own people and that didn't care about development (Online News Hour, December 26, 1996).

Chester Crocker, who was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan administration from 1981 to 1989, justifies why the U.S. turned a blind eye toward human rights abuses and corruption in Zaire in the 1970s and early 1980s. He describes Mobutu as formerly a "very staunch friend" of the West, and one of the most reliable partners during the cold war. Crocker adds:

We were interested in security and stability and in making sure that the contest with our global adversary (the Soviet Union) was one that we prevailed in, so those were our priorities in every region of the world. Let's be frank about it. It was very difficult in those circumstances to make democratization the No. 1 priority in your foreign policy. (Online NewsHour, December 26, 1996).

So long as the Soviets and Cubans were active in Africa, the United States, along with Belgium and France, tolerated Mobutu's corruption and repression. Mohamad Sahnoun, former United Nations mediator for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, also admits that during the Cold War, "government mismanagement, corruption and violations of human rights were allowed to fester because Zaire was an ally in the global battle against communism" (Sahnoun, 1997, p. 58).

So, with Western backing, Mobutu turned into a dictator and kleptocrat, amassing a personal fortune of over \$3 billion, including palaces in Zaire, and homes on the French Riviera and Switzerland, while his country remained one of the world's poorest (Young, 1978; 1985). American security assistance, economic aid, and political support remained an important element of Mobutu's power (Young, 1978).

Mobutu's government faced several internal rebellions in the 1970s, including one major one in May 1978, when about 5000 fighters of the *Front National pour la Liberation du Congo* (FNLC) launched an attack and seized the mineral-rich Kolwezi area in the province of Shaba. The rebel force was defeated only after military intervention by France and Belgium, as well as American logistical support (Young, 1978, p.169).

Contrary to what the American administration and media were reporting—that the attack was the work of the Soviet Union and Cuba—Young argued then that ordinary Zairians were behind the rebellion, which derived its sympathy within Zaire and abroad “from the political weakness of the regime and the poisonous social atmosphere in the country” (1978, p. 170). Yet again, with the support of the West, Mobutu managed to put the then widespread internal animosity toward his regime under control (Young, 1978, p.180).

With the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy began to focus on issues of human rights and good governance. Mobutu could no longer hide his dictatorship under the ideological alliance with the West (Lief & Pasternack, 1997, p.36). In fact, the U.S. eventually suspended aid to Zaire over human rights abuses and stepped up pressure on the government to embrace democratization and political

reforms. For instance in 1990, Secretary of State James Baker visited Mobutu and urged him "to join the world-wide wave of democratization" (Weismann, 1997, p.38).

When the Clinton administration took over, it continued to press for democratic reforms in Zaire, threatening sanctions and other drastic measures (Weissman, 1997, p.38). At one point, the American ambassador to Zaire, Daniel Simpson, implored "freedom loving people around the world, especially those living in Canada and the United States, to be as impatient as possible with the Mobutu government's failure to transition Zaire to democracy, and to look ahead now to the great task of rebuilding the new Zaire of the future" (Online NewsHour, December 26, 1996).

It was around that time that a new rebellion broke out in the east of the country, quickly turning into a popular national rebellion. It was spearheaded by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, led by Laurent Kabil, who had been involved in anti-Mobutu opposition since the 1960s. Within four months, the rebel force had all but crushed Zaire's poorly paid and ill trained military, capturing three quarters of the vast African country. By April 1997, the White House was calling for Mobutu's resignation (See: "Our Man in Kinshasa," *The New Republic*, 216 (17), 9). On May 17, 1997, Kabil's alliance finally overthrew Mobutu, who had once sworn he would never be referred to as "the former president of Zaire."

### **THE MEDIA AND FOREIGN POLICY**

Normative liberal-democratic theory postulates that the U.S. media are independent sources of information and forums for public debate (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). This theory ascribes to the mass media "the role of watchdog, protecting the public from the power of rulers, digging out evidence of abuse and

error, and treating official information sources like Greeks bearing gifts" (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1981, pp.470-71). Also under this framework, sometimes known as the adversary press model, a "surveillance service is assigned to the mass media, which are expected independently to interpret environmental events according to their own lights and not just take on trust, what interested parties *say* their policies are designed to achieve" (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1981, p.471).

However, others contend that the idea of an adversary press is more of an ideal than reality. According to Hallin (1983),

The press is as much an 'establishment' institution today as it was in the 1960s. Washington is still the main locus of foreign affairs coverage, and Washington reporters, for all the increased skepticism and sophistication they have gained in recent years, still see it as their job... to reflect the thinking in Washington (p.34)

Blumler & Gurevitch also recognize that the adversary model of press-government relations is "narrow." For instance, they point out, it ignores the enormous cooperation and collaboration in the interaction between the press and government. They identify another model, the exchange model, which recognizes the interactions between journalists and politicians, while at the same time acknowledging a "certain distance and even an oppositional mentality in the relationship" (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1981, p.473).

Others propose a more radical model of press-government relations. For instance, Herman & Chomsky (1988) suggest the U.S. media work along a "propaganda model" under which they "serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity..." (p.xi). They propose that because of "filters" such as concentrated ownership of the media, reliance on official sources, and anticommunist ideology, media coverage often supports the foreign policy concerns of the American government.

Several other studies have examined the ideological bias, institutional bias, and professional routines of journalists, and concluded that official news sources, especially those in government and business, often give direction to the news and that media coverage ends up legitimating the status quo (Bagdikian, 1990; Bennett, 1990; 1996; Bourdieu, 1998; Gans, 1980; Schudson, 1967; Tuchman, 1978).

Whichever perspective one takes, it is imperative to recognize the symbiotic relationship that exists between the media and government (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1981; Graber, 1997). While normative press-government relations in a democratic political system may be adversarial, it would appear that actual relations tend to be more in the nature of an exchange relationship. This is especially because of media reliance on government for information and government's dependence on the media for intelligence and communication with the public.

Turning to the coverage of foreign events, several studies suggest ideology guides mainstream media reporting (e.g. Bagdikian, 1990; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). For instance, in their study of U.S. media coverage of communist states and American client states in Latin America during the 1980s, Herman & Chomsky (1988) found that the U.S. media were negative toward the former and "soft" on the latter. Hallin (1983) also suggests that ideology was one of the factors that sustained presidential power over foreign affairs news, at least in the 1950s and 1960s. This involved "the commitment of the country to a world view that saw all international events in terms of the struggle between East and West, Democracy and Totalitarianism, and all, therefore, involving national security" (p.34).

Other studies of U.S. media coverage of foreign affairs have illuminated the "institutional bias" that purportedly colors the reporting (e.g. Bennett, 1990; Chang, 1988; Dickson 1992). These studies suggest that, especially because of reliance on official Washington sources, press coverage of foreign affairs remains within narrow institutional bounds, and often supports the government line. For instance, Bennett (1990), who examined *The New York Times'* coverage of Nicaragua between 1983 and 1986, concludes that its coverage was "cued by Congress, not by the paper's own political agenda or a sense of 'adversarial journalism'" (p.121). Bennett suggests the U.S. news media "tend to 'index' the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic" (p.106).

Dickson (1992) complemented Bennett's study by examining the *New York Times'* and *Washington Post's* coverage of Nicaragua from 1983-87. She concludes that the two newspapers demonstrated a pattern of "legitimizing the U.S. government line" in the U.S.-Nicaraguan conflict. Although they were not "uncritical or dupes of the Reagan administration, the *Post* and *Times* let government officials dominate the debate, and as a result, determine the valid issues." Moreover, she adds, the press "frequently failed to reflect a divergence of viewpoints, to question the merit of U.S. policy goals and fulfill its self-declared mission as governmental watchdog" (p.571).

However, others, without dismissing the basic assumption of the indexing hypothesis, have faulted it for being narrow. For instance, Althaus, et al. (1996), who tested the indexing hypothesis on media coverage of the U.S.-Libya crisis of 1985-86, point out, among other things, that it does not include foreign elites who are sources of

news. They suggest that foreign elites are increasingly influential in American policy discourse because of the “decentered, destabilized international political system (p.418).” This suggestion appears reasonable especially considering that in recent years, foreign governments have increasingly turned to public relations consultants to improve their images in international reporting. In fact, in his study of *The New York Times'* and *Washington Post's* coverage of the Tiananmen and Kwangju student movements, Kim (2000) found that U.S. government officials were not the most frequently cited sources by the two newspapers.

Yet, the multiplicity of sources does not seem to undermine the role of foreign policy concerns in shaping American news coverage of foreign events. As Hachten (1996) argues, whereas Western news media are relatively independent of their governments, they still tend to report foreign news from the viewpoint of their countries' foreign policy concerns. He says this is not the result of a “conspiratorial link” between the press and government, but “rather, the unsurprising fact is that events abroad are of interest to readers or viewers in proportion to the ways their own national concerns are involved” (p.138).

Ramaprasad (1983) agrees that the U.S. foreign press coverage of a country, both in terms of magnitude and direction, has often coincided with U.S. foreign policy toward that country:

Despite the avowed allegiance on the part of the press to the libertarian philosophy, it is possible that the press may be subtly influenced in its coverage by government thinking in the area of foreign policy where nationalism may begin to creep in (p.72).

Sahin (1973) who carried out a comparative analysis of *The New York Times'* coverage of Turkey in two contrasting periods also concluded that the paper's “evaluative assessment of foreign political figures and institutions changes in response

to shifts in American foreign policy" and that "in the long run, American ideals and interests seem to influence the way *The New York Times* treats and covers international affairs" (p.689).

On the whole, then, despite indications that American foreign news coverage sometimes challenges the official line, there appears to be ample evidence that the news media often promote prevailing official "frames" of events around the world.

### HYPOTHESES

From the existing literature, the following hypotheses based on source type and evaluative direction, as well as images of the Zairian leader and armed groups were generated.

H1. *The New York Times* will make greater use of American government sources than other sources to report the two armed conflicts in Zaire.

H2. *The New York Times* will make greater use of armed opposition as sources in reporting the second than reporting the first armed conflict.

H3. *The New York Times* will make greater use of Zairian government sources to report the first than to report the second armed conflict.

H4. *The New York Times* will make greater use of pro-rebellion news sources to report the second than to report the first armed conflict.

H5. *The New York Times* will use more favorable symbolic terms (e.g. "revolutionaries," "freedom fighters," liberators) to report the second than to report the first armed conflict.

H6. *The New York Times* will use more favorable symbolic terms (e.g. "uniter" of Zaire; crucial to the "stability" of Zaire) about the Zairian leader during the first armed conflict than the second.

### METHODOLOGY

This is a comparative content analysis based on news stories drawn from *The New York Times*, which is not only considered the U.S. "newspaper of record," but is

also believed to have the most influential and comprehensive coverage of international affairs by any American newspaper (Gitlin, 1980, p.299; Graber, 1997, p.340).

Data was collected from *The New York Times'* coverage in the two periods: May 15-November 11, 1978 and September 01, 1996-May 18, 1997. This comparison is appropriate because, as has already been pointed out, in 1978 the Zairian government led by President Mobutu faced armed opposition at a time when it was supported by the United States, while by the time the 1996 rebellion broke out, the U.S. had all but abandoned Mobutu's government. The coverage of the first conflict started on May 15, and although the conflict was defused in a short time, coverage continued well into November. The second conflict started in September 1996 and ended with the overthrow of Mobutu on May 17, 1997. To establish U.S. government relations to Zaire, the study relied on the amount of foreign aid, comments of administration officials, foreign policy commentaries and essays, as well as historical accounts of the relationship.

The news stories that were content-analyzed were drawn through a search on *The New York Times* Archive on the Lexis-Nexis database (for the second period) and *The New York Times* Index (for the first period). A total of 130 stories were generated for the first period, while 585 were generated for the second. Because this was only a preliminary study, 62 stories were drawn from the first period using systematic random sampling (every other article). For the second period, 59 stories were drawn using systematic random sampling (every 10<sup>th</sup> article). This was deemed the best way of balancing the two samples, because there was disproportionate coverage in the two periods.

For purposes of this study, a news story is any article where the reporter uses the formal attributes of the news story by citing the procedure he or she used to get the story; suggesting he/she obtained the information from other sources than his/her own explicit opinions; presenting unattributed material as facts; and using other material appearing in sections designated for general or international news (Onyango-Obbo, 1985). Editorials, letters to the editor, and opinion columns were excluded because they do not purport to be objective, and are not necessarily viewed by readers as fair and balanced presentation of facts (Dickson, 1992).

### **Units of Analysis**

The unit of analysis was the paragraph. Previous studies that have used the paragraph as a coding unit (e.g. Chang, 1988; Kim, 2000; Lee & Yang, 1995) suggest it is appropriate, especially when one is analyzing such concepts as story or source direction (positive, neutral, or negative). The 62 stories for the first period (May 15-November 11, 1978) generated a total of 681 paragraphs, while the 59 stories for the second period generated 1,024 paragraphs.

### **Categories of Analysis**

The category system for measurements was modeled largely along similar lines of analysis as those of Kim (2000) and Lee & Yang (1995). Source affiliation consisted of 10 categories, namely U.S. government/official; (2) U.S. non-officials; (3) Zairian government/officials; (4) Zairian non-officials; (5) Member of anti-government group; (6) African diplomats/officials; (7) Western and other diplomats/officials; (8) Zairian official opposition; (9) U.N., humanitarian officials/aid workers; and (10) Others. This was used to test H1-H3.

Categories of source direction included: (a) positive (pro-government/anti-rebellion) (b) neutral (balanced), and (c) Negative (anti-government/pro-rebellion). The positive category included sources that talked favorably about the Zairian government or criticized the fighting groups. The “neutral” category included news sources who, to borrow from Kim (2000, p.26), presented “a non-evaluative viewpoint or made an ambiguous statement” about the state of affairs. The negative category included sources that conveyed an unfavorable depiction of the Zairian government or supported the fighting group. This was used to test H4.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested through analysis of symbolic terms. It has been suggested that media coverage could be illuminated through examining the “world of text,” especially the use of symbols and metaphors (Edelman, 1964; Lule, 1989). According to Edelman, every symbol used in a news story carries “an attitude, set of impressions, or a pattern of events associated through time, through space, through logic, or through imagination with the symbol” (1964, p. 6). Lule adds that news coverage is imbued with binary symbols, such as “good or bad,” “negative or positive,” which serve to construct the meaning of news content. This study accordingly analyzed some symbolic terms used to describe (a) the nature of the fighting groups; and (b) President Mobutu’s image. Every symbolic term in each story was counted. To analyze the symbolic terms used to describe the nature of the fighting groups (H5), all terms were grouped into three categories: (a) favorable terms, which included references such as “revolutionaries,” “freedom fighters” or “popular uprising”; (b) neutral terms, which included references without any apparent value judgment, such as armed opposition; and (c) unfavorable terms, which included references such as “invaders” “insurgents” or

“rebels.” In analyzing symbolic terms used to describe President Mobutu (H6), favorable terms included references to him as the only person who could “unite” Zaire; as crucial to the “stability” of the country and any other such terms. Neutral terms included “president,” “leader” or “head of state,” while unfavorable terms included “dictator,” “tyrant,” “autocrat,” “authoritarian,” “corrupt,” etc.

### **Intercoder Reliability**

Two coders coded the same 14 stories (six for the first and eight for the second period) to test for intercoder reliability. Using Holsti’s method, (see: Wimmer & Dominick, 2000, p.151) reliability for type and direction of news source was .93 and .95 respectively. Reliability on symbolic terms was 97 percent.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Type and Direction of News Source:**

Each paragraph of the sampled stories was examined to code the type and direction of news sources. The sample contained 430 sources from a total of 681 paragraphs (63.1%) for the first period (the armed conflict of 1978), and 437 sources from 1024 paragraphs (42.7%) for the second period (the conflict of 1996/97).

Table 1(a) shows that U.S. government or official sources were not the most frequently cited in both periods. In 1978 U.S. sources came second (25.6%) after Western and other diplomats/officials (38.6%). In 1996/97, U.S. official sources were a distant 7<sup>th</sup> (7.8%), eclipsed even by non-official Zairian sources. The most frequently cited sources in this period were U.N. officials, humanitarian and aid workers (22.4%). Therefore, the results do not support the first hypothesis (H1) that *The New York Times* would make greater use of U.S. official sources than other sources to report the two armed conflicts.

[Table 1 About Here]

It may well be that the high frequency of U.S. official sources in the first period was because of Cold War situation. As already mentioned, by 1978, Zaire was a major U.S. ally in Africa. Any threat to that government from what was seen as "communist-backed rebels" was bound to attract substantial comment from Washington. In fact, a good number of stories in the sample mention diplomatic standoffs between the United States on the one hand, and Cuba and the Soviet Union, which were reportedly supporting the anti-government group in Zaire, on the other (See, for example, "Castro Says Carter Was 'Deceived' On Cuban Role," *The New York Times*, June 14, 1978, A8). As for the decrease in U.S. officials in the second period, we could speculate that sophistications in public relations, and faster flow of information in recent years, have produced more competition to counter U.S. official discourse. In such a situation, therefore, it would be very difficult to point at the reduction in U.S. sources as a result of shifting American foreign policy.

As for H2, results indicate that *The New York Times* indeed relied more on members of the anti-government group to report the second than to report the first conflict. While such sources were only 2.6% in 1978, they rose to 12.6% in 1996/97. While the results do not appear to show that the anti-government group shaped the reporting in the second period, they seem to support the second hypothesis. Likewise, the results somewhat support the third hypothesis that the *New York Times* would make greater use of Zairian government sources to report the first than to report the second armed conflict. However, the difference between 15.3% for the first period and 12.8% for the second is not significant.

Table 1(b) shows a significant difference in news source direction in the two periods. While negative sources (those who took an anti-government or pro-rebellion stance) were only 5.3% in 1978, they increased to 28.6% in 1996/97. Conversely, positive sources (those taking a pro-government or anti-rebellion stance) decreased from 32.8% in 1978 to only 11.0% in 1996/97. Therefore, the results appear to support H4 that *The New York Times* would make greater use of pro-rebellion sources to report the second than to report the first armed conflict. However, it is important to point out that the high frequency of neutral news sources (61.9% in 1978 and 60.4% in 1996/97) would seem to suggest that the *New York Times* for the most part trod the middle path often associated with independent journalism. Whether this is always desirable is subject to both practical and theoretical debate.

#### **Comparison of Symbolic Terms:**

The study identified a total of 198 symbolic terms that *The New York Times* used to describe the nature of the anti-government group in the 1978, and 307 terms in 1996/97. Table 2 (a) shows that the paper used mostly unfavorable terms to describe the anti-government groups in both periods (74.2% in 1978 and 88.3% in 1996/97). The results show that while the paper did not use any favorable terms to describe the anti-government group in 1978, such terms were a negligible 1% in 1996/97. There is no significant difference to support H5 that *The New York Times* would use more favorable symbolic terms to describe the anti-government group in the second than in the first armed conflict. Moreover, the higher frequency of neutral terms (25.8%) in the first period compared to only 10.7% for the second period also suggests H5 cannot be supported. One reason to explain this contradiction could be the definition of the neutral

category. Some journalists have argued that the word "rebel," which was considered negative in this study, is in fact a neutral way of describing many armed anti-government groups. According to Ford Burkhart of the *New York Times'* foreign desk, "'Rebels' is an accurate label if there is a rebellion of some sort under way; that is, an armed and organized group fighting against an established government." He adds that "a rebellion is a fairly accurate and standard word for what rebels do, as opposed to criminals, thugs, so on" (Personal notes, March 26, 2001). If 'rebel' had been considered a neutral term in this study, the results would not only have shown more neutral terms in the second period, but also less unfavorable terms in the same period.

[Table 2 About Here]

On the face of it, Table 2(b) does not appear to support H6 that *The New York Times* would use more favorable symbolic terms about the Zairian leader during the first armed conflict than the second. Favorable terms were only 3.7% in 1978, compared to none in 1996/97, which does not appear to be a significant difference. However, it is significant that unfavorable terms describing Mobutu increased from 1.2% in 1978 to 30.7% in 1996/97. In this period, the *Times* increasingly described Mobutu with such terms as "unpopular," "autocratic president," "dictator," (See: "Tense Zaire Is Primped For Return Of Mobutu," *The New York Times*, December 17, 1996; "Zaire's Entire Political Class is Target of Rebel Army, *The New York Times*, March 11, 1997).

Moreover, while the high frequency of neutral terms in both periods (95.1% in 1978 and 69.3% in 1996/97) would appear to suggest that *The New York Times* did not take sides in reporting about the Zairian leader's exploits and woes, the high incidence of neutral articles in the first period seems to suggest that the paper was more silent about

President Mobutu's excesses in 1978. Thus considered in its entirety, Table 2 (b) would in fact seem to support the sixth hypothesis.

## DISCUSSION

The findings seem to offer a mixed picture. First, they suggest *The New York Times'* coverage of the two different conflicts in Zaire was in some respects congruent to prevailing U.S. government policy toward the African country. For instance, at a time when the American government had a favorable policy toward the Zairian government, the paper not only relied heavily on U.S. officials, but also on more positive sources (pro-Zairian government/anti-rebellion) to report the conflict. Conversely, when the U.S. government had turned pressure on the Zairian government to democratize, *The New York Times* relied on more negative sources than positive ones to report the armed conflict.

It is also particularly significant that as had been hypothesized the paper relied more on members of the anti-government group to report the second than to report the first conflict. The fact that the paper turned to members of the fighting group more often in the second period could have served as a legitimating influence regarding opposition to Mobutu's government, even if *The New York Times* did not necessarily portray the group positively. However, the higher incidence of anti-government sources could be explained by recent sophistications in public relations, and faster flow of information in recent years, which has meant that rebel groups, including terrorists, can communicate much more easily and directly with the news media.

The fact that the paper used significantly more unfavorable symbolic terms to describe the Zairian leader after the U.S. had abandoned him as an ally appears also to

confirm some congruence between the paper's reporting and the American government policy toward Zaire. A review of historical accounts and commentaries shows that dictatorship, human rights violations and corruption in Zaire for the most part went on unreported or sometimes even justified during 1978, even though at the time other independent observers were already painting Mobutu as an autocrat presiding over a corrupt regime (See: e.g. Young, 1978).

However, the results do not suggest that the paper's reporting took exactly the same position as the U.S. government policy. The fact that neutral sources were cited more frequently than others in both periods suggests that even when *The New York Times* followed cues from Washington, it did not abandon its independence from government. Moreover, when it came to describing the Zairian leader, the symbolic terms were predominantly neutral in both periods.

The results do not support the assumption of Bennett's indexing hypothesis; that U.S. official sources would be the most dominant in the coverage of a foreign crisis or event. On the contrary, the study has shown that the news sources used most frequently were Western and other diplomats/officials for the 1978 conflict, and UN, humanitarian officials, and aid workers for the more recent conflict. These findings seem to support the proposition of Althaus, et al. (1996) on the influence of foreign elites on the "official debate." Their study suggests "journalists can use foreign sources, not just domestic elites, to satisfy the norms of conflict and balance" (p.418). Moreover, as Table 3 (a) suggests, in both periods most of the stories were filed from Zaire, and not from Washington, presumably undermining the influence of U.S. official sources.

[Table 3 About Here]

Yet, the study supports aspects of Bennett's indexing hypothesis regarding the media's emphasis on official sources to the exclusion of others voices (1990, p.106). Indeed, results show that U.S. non-official sources were very rarely relied upon. As Dickson (1992) points out, such a trend limits discussion of foreign policy issues to the political elites of the executive branch or Congress and robs the public of the vigorous debate that would be expected from a divergence of political views (p.570).

**CONCLUSION**

This study has shown that in some major ways trends in *The New York Times'* coverage were related to the trends in U.S. foreign policy toward Zaire. The paper carried relatively more positive evaluations of the Zairian government in 1978 when U.S. policy was favorable and more negative evaluations in 1996/97 when American policy was no longer favorable. Conversely, despite overwhelmingly describing the anti-government groups in the two periods negatively, *The New York Times* carried more voices of armed opposition to the Zairian government at the time when U.S. policy had turned against President Mobutu.

However, this study also finds that contrary to a major assumption of the indexing hypothesis, U.S. official sources were not the most frequently cited in *The New York Times'* coverage of the two armed conflicts in Zaire. The results appear to support the view that other sources, including "foreign elites," often counter the official voices in Washington. Moreover, with sophistications in public relations, and faster flow of information in recent years, different parties involved in foreign events or crises are more likely to get covered than before. This phenomenon complicates the

picture since a content analysis alone cannot establish the cause of media sourcing patterns.

It is also important to note that the Cold War presented a major challenge to independent journalism. Jingoism and nationalism often naturally crept into the reporting of even the most skeptical journalists. As Hallin (1983) suggests, the Cold War, among others, "made the traditional conception of the press as a check on government power seem irrelevant" (p.32). Yet, this study also shows that in some cases post-Cold War coverage in *The New York Times* may not have been as skeptical as expected.

A caveat: the findings and conclusions of this study rest on data drawn from a single study of one newspaper. Therefore, we need to tread with caution, especially on generalization. Also, as Bennett (1990) argues, patterns of media indexing may vary from issue to issue and from one political situation to another (p.122).

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**TABLE 1**  
**Comparison of Type and Direction of News Source (%)**

	1978 (N=430)	1996/97 (N=437)
<b>(a) Source Type</b>		
U.S. government/official	25.6	7.8
U.S. non-official	2.3	0
Zairian government/official	15.3	12.8
Zairian non-official	1.2	14.4
Member of anti-government group	2.6	12.6
African diplomats/officials	2.3	2.5
Western and other diplomats/officials	38.6	14.9
Zairian official opposition	1.9	1.8
U.N., humanitarian officials/aid workers	0.9	22.4
Others	9.3	10.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%
<b>(b) Source Direction</b>		
Positive (pro-Zairian government/anti-rebellion)	32.8	11.0
Neutral (balanced)	61.9	60.4
Negative (anti-government/pro-rebellion)	5.3	28.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%

**TABLE 2**  
**Comparison of Symbolic Terms (%)**

	1978 (N=198)	1996/97 (N=307)
<b>(a) Symbolic terms for anti-government group</b>		
Favorable (revolutionaries, freedom fighters, liberators, etc.)	0	1.0
Neutral (opposition movement, anti-government alliance, etc.)	25.8	10.7
Unfavorable (rebels, insurgents, invaders, guerillas, etc.)	74.2	88.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%
<b>(b) Symbolic terms for Mobutu</b>		
	(N=82)	(N=75)
Favorable (uniter of Zaire, stabilizing factor, etc.)	3.7	0
Neutral (president, Zairian leader, etc.)	95.1	69.3
Unfavorable (dictator, corrupt, etc.)	1.2	30.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%

**TABLE 3**  
**Comparing Datelines and Bylines for the two periods (%)**

	1978 (N=62)	1996/97 (N=59)
(a) Dateline		
Zaire	43.5	66.1
United States	21.0	5.1
Africa	29.0	10.2
Other	6.5	18.6
TOTAL	100%	100%
(b) Byline	(N=62)	(N=59)
Staff	50	67.8
Wire	50	32.2
TOTAL	100%	100%

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Framing Environmental Destruction on U.S. Army Camps  
in South Korea

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Framing Environmental Destruction on U.S. Army Camps in South Korea

**Abstract**

This study aims at examining the South Korean news media agenda on the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue over the last 12 years, and the "us vs. them" meta-frame which the South Korean news media employed in reporting this bilateral conflict. Two U.S. army-related environmental incidents were found to be trigger events that related the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) revision issue. The study included the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue in its analysis to identify the "us vs. them" meta-frame more clearly. The "us vs. them" meta-frame was found to be apparent in terms of salience, thematic framing, causal responsibility attribution, and treatment responsibility attribution. Differences according to the political orientation of news media were also examined.

On July 14, 2000, a local environmental group, *Green Korea United (GKU)*, held a press conference. It revealed that a U.S. soldier dumped a significant amount of toxic fluids into the drains that leads to the Han River, the main water source of Seoul in February 2000. The fluid was called formaldehyde and was supposed to be sent to U.S. military treatment facilities in Okinawa, Japan. The case was reported to the 34<sup>th</sup> Headquarters of the Eighth Division of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) by a Korean-American civilian employee who executed the order. The 34<sup>th</sup> Headquarters concluded that there was no problem if the chemicals were diluted with water. The Korean-American civilian employee also reported the incident to GKU. GKU reported that the total amount dumped was 60 gallons, and USFK maintained that it was 20 gallons, which would not cause any immediate harm to the public health of Seoul citizens.

This incident was not the first or only U.S. army-related, environmental destruction case. Such issues as oil leaks and soil contamination on U.S. army camps have been reported as serious. The dumping incident re-ignited the lingering issue to the extent that it brought significant political and social ripples together. That is, worried and intense public discourse came to center around the presence of the U.S. military, which resulted in the resurrection of anti-Americanism in South Korea.<sup>1</sup> President Kim Dae-jung finally made a public announcement that warned against anti-Americanism and that stressed the role of USFK for national security ("President Kim Warns," 2000). The two governments agreed to include environmental protection clauses in the revision of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which had been previously denied in bilateral negotiation talks by the U.S. government ("Korea, U.S. agree," 2000; "U.S. draft revision," 2000; "U.S. agrees to forge," 2000).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> South Korea is one of 18 nations where the U.S. troops are permanently stationed like Germany and Japan. The U.S. forces began to be stationed in Korea during the Korean War 50 years ago. There has been a continuous series of incidents involving U.S. soldiers and the local people. It is natural, in a sense that those incidents take place as the foreign U.S. soldiers and the oriental Korean civilians came from different cultures and historical backgrounds. South Korea experienced the worst anti-American sentiment in the 1970s, which was mainly led by activist students and left-wing protesters against the government's authoritarian rule. Anti-Americanism triggered by recent U.S. army related incidents is reminiscent of the past mood against the U.S.

<sup>2</sup> The SOFA contains a set of rules governing the status of the U.S. military's 37,000 service members stationed in Korea. The agreement went into effect in 1967, and was revised for the first and only time in December 1990. The two governments held talks on further revisions on seven occasions between November 1995 and September 1996, but failed to make much progress. A negotiation talk was scheduled

Korean news media coverage of USFK by Korean increased due to the dumping incident. Every action and comment by USFK was cautiously followed and reported. The media coverage of the dumping incident illustrates the agenda-setting process, which contains three main components of the media, public, and policy agenda (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). It can be interpreted that the dumping incident highlighted real-world indicators of the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue and provoked the media agenda regarding the issue. High salience of the issue on the media agenda, in turn, may have affected the public agenda on the presence of the U.S. military in Korea and the policy agenda on the SOFA revision.

Two concepts are important in studying the media agenda: salience and framing. Salience is the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relative important (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). The agenda setting approach departs from previous mass media effect research in its emphasis on indirect media effects. Agenda setting is often cited as mass media telling the public "what to think about" rather than "what to think." The high salience of the issue in media coverage tells the public how important the issue is, rather than directs the public a specific way in which to think about the issue.

As the research paradigm has developed from the early focus on issue salience, agenda setting studies have come to encompass another aspect of the media agenda: frames or framing (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). This latest development in the agenda-setting research paradigm paid its attention to framing as the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomenon (Iyengar, 1991, p.11).

The present study examines the media agenda component of the agenda-setting process on the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue. Focusing on the media agenda derives from a relevant theoretical perspective: the social amplification of risk (Kasperson et al., 1988). The social amplification framework provides a possible explanation for how the environmental risk was colored and amplified by the fact that the U.S. army was involved. The framework posits that risk is conceptualized partly as a social construct and partly as an objective property of a hazard or event (Short, 1984).

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to resume on August 2, 2000 after the U.S. draft proposal for the revision was delivered to the Korean government in May 2000.

The experience of risk is therefore not an experience of physical harm, but the result of a process by which individuals or groups learn to acquire or create interpretations of hazards. It can be said that the role of media is critical in developing risk perception when people cannot physically observe or experience it. Environmental harms on U.S. military bases may have not posed actual physical danger to the Korean public. Rather, the way the issue was reported in the media, that is the media agenda, may have contributed to the Korean public's *risk perception* about the environmental destruction on U.S. military camps. The present study intends to illustrate the way environmental risks are socially constructed by media.

To better understand the frame employed by Korean domestic news media, a methodological strategy proposed by Entman is used. As Entman (1991, p.6) noted, "Comparing media narratives of events that could have been reported similarly helps to reveal the critical textual choices that framed the story but would otherwise remain submerged in an undifferentiated text." Comparative analysis reveals the latent, which is more important to identify and interpret frames than the manifest. The present study, therefore, includes environmental destruction on Korean military camps in its investigation for comparison.

#### Relevant Literature on Comparative Framing

Goffman (1974) first introduced the idea of "frame" or "framing." He labeled as "frames" the "schemata of interpretation" which help "classify and organize our life experiences to make sense of them." Frames enable individuals to "locate, perceive, and identify, and label" (1974, p.21). Following Goffman's social cognitive approach, Minsky (1975) also defined frames, in a similar way, as templates or data structures that organize various pieces of information. Frames are mental structures closely related to the ideas of scripts and schemes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

The sociological approach to frames tends to focus on how frames assign meaning to events and issues and affect audiences' understanding of those issues and events through communicative discourse. Gitlin (1980, p.7) defined frames as "persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion," which "enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely [and to] package the information for efficient relay

to their audiences." Gamson (1987, p.143) referred to frames as "central organizing ideas or story lines that provide meaning" to news events. As noted in these definitions, framing essentially involves selection and salience (Entman, 1993). Meaning is assigned through selection and salience. Likewise, exclusion and de-emphasis would also be important processes. Revealing exclusion and de-emphasis would clarify implications of frames found in media narratives and help infer possible effects of the frames on audiences.

The terms, frame or framing, have guided political scientists and mass communication scholars in examining *what* aspects of international and domestic news events are selected and weighed, *how*, and *why* (Entman, 1991; Entman and Rojecki, 1993; Reese and Buckalew, 1995; Lenart and Tag, 1992; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987 & 1989). In addition to political matters, health and environmental risk issues have been also popular subjects that researchers have studied to identify frames inherent in media portrayals (Clarke, 1992; Vaughan and Seifert, 1992; Andsager and Powers, 1999; Bardhan, 2001). Some frames may rise around topics or subjects relevant to specific issues (wars, international conflicts, domestic policies, natural disasters, or health risks). Others may reflect stylistic constraints of news writing (invert pyramid or 5W 1H) or broadcasting news (need for visuals), or organizational limitations of news gathering (Pan and Kosicki, 1993; Reese and Buckalew, 1995; Liebes, 1992; Iyengar, 1989; Kanjiranthinkal and Hickey, 1992).

A few efforts have been made on comparative framing analysis. Herman and Chomsky (1988), in their "propaganda model" of the media, show how news media frame issues and choose topics to serve elites and mobilize public support for special interests. They contrast the double standards underlying between the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the American invasion of Vietnam. Entman (1991) compared U.S. coverage of two airline incidents, the Korean Air Line flight 007 shot down by a Soviet fighter in 1983 and the Iran Air Flight 655 shot down by a U.S. Navy ship in 1988. Liebes (1992) found a difference between how Israeli TV portrayed violent action on the Palestine demonstrators and the Israeli soldiers in the *Intifada* (the uprising of the Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war). Entman and Liebes

noted that the "us vs. them" frame worked mainly in international conflicts.<sup>3</sup> It can be said that this "us vs. them" frame is a meta-frame which differs from topical or subject frames, which have been frequently studied in most framing studies (Andsager and Powers, 1999; Lenart and Targ, 1992; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Clarke, 1992; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). The present study intends to examine the "us vs. them" meta-frame rather than topical frames on the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue. Comparison of frames in similar events or issues helps researchers to identify the meta-frame, which is more generalizable or applicable across various events or issues.

Three research questions guide the present study. First, how has the media agenda on the environmental destruction issue on U.S. army camps changed over time? Second, how does this change relate to the issue of the SOFA revision? Third, how is the "us vs. them" meta-frame in the bilateral environmental issue presented on Korean domestic news media?

### Hypotheses

In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Said (1995) maintains that "otherness" is an aspect of human nature which is needed to define "self."<sup>4</sup> Human's self-concept emerges when he recognizes himself as different from others. This need for "other" may affect journalists' work.

The need for "other" can be a basis of heuristics that the human mind uses to think about things that would otherwise be quite complicated. These heuristics are short-cuts, time-saving devices. People do not evaluate every new information and integrate it into their existing knowledge and belief system. They tend to economize the process of reasoning and judging. Journalists have to process a large amount of information on a daily basis. The need for efficiency makes journalists depend on attribution heuristics. Attribution error, or attribution heuristics, refers to the human tendency to attribute our

<sup>3</sup> The "gain vs. loss" frame has been found to be the most frequent meta-frame in health and environmental risk related matters and Davis, J. J. (1995), and Vaughan, E. and Seifert, M. (1992).

<sup>4</sup> His work is a critique of the academic field of Oriental Studies. He mainly focused on how English, French, and American scholars have approached the Arab societies of North Africa and the Middle East.

own failures to situational causes, and the failures of others to internal causes. In international news reporting, journalists commit the attribution error by citing situational or contextual factors as drivers of their own countries' wrongdoing, and internal or dispositional factors leading to the counterpart countries' misconduct (Liebes, 1992).

Another cognitive psychological explanation, cognitive dissonance, may help explain journalists' attribution errors. People tend to attribute situational causes to their failures because they like to think about themselves positively. When international conflicts happen, journalists would like to report that their own countries could not avoid those conflicts because the situation was beyond their control. By doing this, journalists can reduce potential cognitive dissonance. They do not have to change their beliefs about the morality of their country (Sexton, 1998).

These cognitive tendencies of journalists in international conflicts involving their own countries skew issue salience and frame in a positive way toward their own countries and in a negative way toward the counterpart country.

H1: Korean news media tend to give more salience to U.S. army-related environmental destruction issues than Korean army-related environmental destruction issues.

Iyengar (1989, 1991, and 1993) used the episodic and thematic distinction in his study of framing. In episodic frames, news events are presented as single events, with a beginning and an end. If the event is framed thematically, it is placed in some general or abstract context by mentioning social forces and trends. The essential difference between episodic and thematic framing is that episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues, while thematic framing describes collective or general evidence.

Iyengar linked two elements in deciding to which frame a news story belongs. The first element is, as shown in his examples, if a news story covers an individual or a social entity such as governments. Major focuses are given to individuals in episodic frames, and to societal entities in thematic frames. The second element is if a news story

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His work, however, can be a model for analysis of all Western "discourses on the Other." In K. Windschuttle (January, 1999). "Edward Said's Orientalism Revisited" *The New Criterion*.

is event-oriented or context-oriented. Event-oriented articles tend to focus on what happened while context-oriented articles tend to emphasize why and how the event occurred.

Iyengar's distinction of "thematic" and "episodic" frames, however, is not clear-cut. A news article may still be event-oriented while focusing on a social entity or may hold context orientation in a story about an individual. To avoid this confusion, the study employs Van Dijk's "news schema" which organizes news discourses (1985, 1988a and 1988b)<sup>5</sup> instead of Iyengar's distinction. Unlike Iyengar, Van Dijk mainly analyzed newspapers, and proposed a conventional form for newspaper articles. According to his distinction, an episode consists of a main event and consequences among various components of news schema.

The U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue as a bilateral issue involves more stakeholders than the domestic environmental issue. More stakeholders entail more contextual information for readers in reporting a particular news event.

H2: The U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue tends to be more thematically framed than the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue.

Framing researchers incorporated the notion of responsibility attribution in their definitions of frames. Gamson (1992) claimed that frames typically diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe. Entman (1993, p.52) maintained that frames "define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies." Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997, p.222) saw frames as "the process by which a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issue and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to that issue."

Iyengar (1991) defined responsibility in two ways: causal and treatment. Causal responsibility deals with who should be blamed, and treatment responsibility deals with who can solve (or hamper the resolution of) the problem. He studied the attribution of

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<sup>5</sup> Even though Van Dijk's discourse analysis is qualitative, his "new schemata" is useful to distinguish between episodic and thematic elements based on newspaper articles' unique organizing format. The qualitative structural elements will be incorporated into a quantitative analysis of the episodic-thematic framing.

responsibility by audience. In a series of experiments, he found that audiences tend to attribute responsibilities to individuals in episodic frames, and to social institutions in thematic frames. It can be said that, by his definition, episodic articles tend to feature individuals, and thematic articles tend to draw attention to social entities like governments.

Entman (1991) explained responsibility attribution by the concept of "generalization." Generalization refers to the attribution of responsibility to a larger entity in a broader context. That is, the Korean Air Line news by U.S. domestic media frequently attributed the act to the Soviet Union government as a whole rather than to a Soviet pilot. According to Entman, domestic news media reporting would be different when the country of the media is involved in negative news events from when a foreign country is involved. Main differences may reside in how the media frame which is responsible for the events: individuals or social entities. They tend to emphasize larger social entities rather than individuals as causal agents to size up the importance of the issue when a foreign country is involved.

H3: Korean news media are more likely to put causal responsibility on social entities when the U.S. military was involved than when the Korean military was involved.

Iyengar's second type of responsibility, treatment responsibility, is also differently attributed in the "us vs. them" meta-frame. The meta-frame guides domestic news media to attribute positive treatment responsibility to the Korean government or army and negative treatment responsibility to the U.S. government or army. That is, the U.S. military or government tends to be portrayed as holding up resolution while the Korean military or government tends to be depicted as actively pursuing resolution.

H4-1: Negative treatment responsibility tends to be attributed to the U.S. army or government more frequently than positive treatment responsibility.

H4-2: Positive treatment responsibility tends to be attributed to the Korean army or government more frequently than negative treatment responsibility.

The five hypotheses are intended to test if and how the "us vs. them" meta-frame was incorporated into the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue (research question 3). The present study also intends to examine how the media agenda on the army-related environmental destruction differs according to political orientation of news media: pro-government and anti-government. The following hypotheses are intended to test the difference.

H5-1: Anti-government Korean news media tend to give more salience to the army-related environmental destruction issue - both U.S. and Korean - than pro-government Korean news media.

H5-2: Anti-government Korean news media tend to attribute negative treatment responsibility to the Korean army or government more frequently than pro-government Korean news media in the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue.

### Method

A content analysis was conducted of two major national newspapers in South Korea.

#### *Newspaper selection*

Two Korean newspapers, Chosun Ilbo (Chosun Daily) and Hankyoreh Shinmun (Hankyoreh Newspaper), were chosen on the basis of their circulation and political orientation. There are ten national daily newspapers in Korea. Chosun Ilbo, Dongah Ilbo, Joongang Ilbo and Hanguk Ilbo are in the leading group, and Chosun Ilbo is considered as the most widely read among them. Hankyoreh Shinmun is the only anti-government newspaper in the ten daily newspapers. Chosun Ilbo is the only newspaper that participates in the Korean Audit Bureau of Circulations ([www.kabc.or.kr](http://www.kabc.or.kr)).

According to the Bureau's report, Chosun Ilbo issued about 2,500,000 copies per day in 2000. Hankyoreh Shinmun claims that they have a circulation of 600,000 ([www.hani.co.kr](http://www.hani.co.kr)).

Different political orientations among leading Korean newspapers have been extensively researched in various political issues (Sohn, 1997) or taken for granted to build further research questions on the differences (Kwak, 1999). Among the leading

newspaper group, Chosun Ilbo has been selected as the most representative of the mainstream news media's conservatism, and Hankyoreh Shinmun as the most progressive often against the South Korean government's policies. Hankyoreh Shinmun's unique ownership structure represents its anti-government political orientation. It was initiated by some 200 journalists who had fought for freedom of the press under the military regimes over 30 years in 1988. It is owned by over 60,000 South Korean people.

### *Article selection*

An electronic database service was used to select articles. Korean Press Foundation ([www.kinds.or.kr](http://www.kinds.or.kr)) provides for a database that includes ten national daily newspapers, four financial newspapers, twenty-three local newspapers, two English newspapers, and eleven news weeklies and monthlies. The abstracts of network television news are also available. The database stores every article of the ten national dailies since 1990.

Several keywords were used to find army-related environmental destruction articles exhaustively. For the U.S. army, "environment destruction," "Formaldehyde," "Han river," "Maehyang-ni,"<sup>6</sup> "oil leak,"<sup>7</sup> "toxic chemical," and "Uranium"<sup>8</sup> along with "USFK" were used. For the Korean army, "environmental destruction" along with "army camps" was used.<sup>9</sup> Articles were selected only if they included at least one whole sentence indicating that environmental harms - both specifically or generally - were done on military camps.<sup>10</sup> The time frame applied was from January 1990 to January 2002.

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<sup>6</sup> In 1995, there was an accidental bombing in a USFG's training range in this town, "Maehyang-ni." This bombing incident raised an issue of noise problem and environmental destruction near U.S. army training ranges.

<sup>7</sup> The oil leak on the U.S. military camps has another environment issue related to USFK.

<sup>8</sup> The bombing incident in "Maehyang-ni" also realized some concerns about Uranium, hazardous military garbage in USFK training ranges.

<sup>9</sup> Since 1990, no particular environmental incident related the Korean army was reported. Therefore, the general key word, *environmental destruction*, was used to select articles rather than multiple key words.

<sup>10</sup> Articles are excluded that feature only the army's efforts to protect environment without mentioning environmental destruction on military camps. For example, reports of the army's participation in a nationwide environmental campaign or the introduction of environmental clauses in the SOFA revision.

After removing articles that appeared repeatedly, a total of 197 articles were finally chosen for the U.S. army and 34 for the Korean army.

For research questions 1 and 2, another wave of article selection was conducted. Articles were selected that cover the SOFA revision issue in the headline and the lead. A total of 490 articles (Chosun, 176 articles; Hankyoreh, 314 articles) were chosen from the two newspapers.

### *Operationalization*

*Salience:* The present study measures salience in terms of frequency and average article length. In print media, editorial decision about which section a news story is included in and graphic components such as the size of headlines and the use of pictures will affect the salience of the issue in addition to the frequency and the length. These graphic components or information about editorial decision are not available in the electronic database that the present study uses. The average article length is measured by the number of characters.

*Thematic and Episodic framing:* Iyengar's distinction of the thematic and episodic frames is not applicable to newspaper articles since articles are still event-oriented while focusing on social entities in many cases as pointed out earlier. The present study postulates that this difficulty results from the difference in study populations. Iyengar mainly studied television network news narratives. He hinted that episodic reports provide for "good pictures" on the scene while thematic reports feature "talking heads" (p.14). The present study employs Van Dijk's (1985, 1988a and 1988b) conceptualization of "episode" since he mainly studied newspapers articles.

Following Van Dijk's news schema, *Main Event and Consequence* comprises *Episode*. *Main Event* "describes the very news event" which often repeats throughout the whole article. It contains the information about the specific time and place of the event. It is fact rather than opinion or evaluation. *Consequence* is what Main event caused. Sentences that are used for describing main event and consequence contribute to the article being episodically framed. Such other components as *Background, Context, Circumstances, Previous Event, History, Verbal Reaction, Expectation, and Evaluation*

consist of contextual information which determine if and how the main event is thematically framed. *Background* provides general, historical, political or social context or conditions of the event. *Context* is main event in other or previous news items, of which *Circumstances and Previous Event* consist. *Circumstance* refers to other currently relevant events. *Previous Event* is a specific event which directly precedes the main event. *History* refers to events in the past that are indirectly related with the present situation or event. In many cases, history, previous events and context merge. *Verbal Reaction* is quotation from important participants or prominent political leaders. *Comments* feature opinions and evaluations of the journalist or newspaper, which comprises *Evaluation*, evaluation opinion about the main event, and *Expectation*, possible future political or other consequences in the form of prediction (Van Dijk, 1985, p.87-88; 1988b, p.53-58).<sup>11</sup> Sentences that provide for these types of information contribute to the article being thematically framed.

In practice, news articles cannot be solely episodic or thematic. To draw attention, journalists may start with an episodic focus and gradually move to a thematic focus. Or articles may start with defining a social problem in a broader policy context, then focus its consequences on individual lives. After deciding whether each sentence is thematic or episodic, the number of words in each sentence is counted, and the whole article's frame is decided based on the relative proportion of thematic sentences.

*Causal and Treatment responsibility:* Causal responsibility refers to assigning responsibilities to those who caused the problem (individuals or social entities). As mentioned, it focuses on the origin of the problem. The article tends to blame who (individuals or social entities) initiated adverse consequences. Treatment responsibility refers to assigning responsibilities to those who have the power or the means to solve the problem. Unlike causal responsibility, treatment responsibility can be depicted in both positive and negative ways. If individuals or social entities show their willingness to solve the problem, treatment responsibility is assigned positively. If individuals or social entities display reluctance to solve the problem, it is assigned negatively.

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<sup>11</sup> Van Dijk did not include the definition of *Circumstances*. Therefore, the present author defined it.

In each article, one individual or social entity is identified for each type of responsibility. If several individuals or social entities are mentioned in an article, the one covered in the headline or lead, or the one covered first is regarded as holding each responsibility.

### ***Coding***

Two pretests were conducted to revise the coding scheme and instruction. Content was analyzed over a four-week period (2/11-3/10/2002). Following Riffe, Lacy and Fico's (1998) suggestion, 20 percent of the total articles selected were coded by two trained coders to compute intercoder reliabilities.<sup>12</sup> The intercoder reliability for article length was .98, for thematic framing .75, for causal responsibility .82, and for treatment responsibility .76.<sup>13</sup>

### **Results**

*Media coverage of the U.S. Army-related environmental destruction issue and the SOFA revision issue:* The dumping incident as a trigger event (RQ 1 & 2)

Media coverage of U.S. army-related environmental destruction over the last 12 years has peaked five times: May 1997, May 2000, July 2000, August 2001, and January 2002 (See Figure 1). In May 1997, it was revealed that Depleted Uranium was accidentally left to explode without safety measures in a general disposal compound in a U.S. army camp near Seoul. In May 2000, the U.S. army-related environmental issues returned to the media agenda: A U.S. fighter accidentally released a bomb at a training range in Maehyang-ni. This accidental bombing explosion re-ignited noise-related problems and uranium concerns in villages near U.S. training ranges. Two months later, in July 2000, GKU revealed the Formaldehyde dumping incident. The issue surfaced on the media agenda again in August 2001 with a dispute between the two governments about

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<sup>12</sup> Approximately, 20 % of the total content units are needed for a reliability test if the population size is 250. 95% level of agreement in population is assumed at a 95 % level of probability. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed for the average article length and thematic framing, and Scott's pi was computed for causal and treatment responsibilities.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to Appendix A for categories of causal and treatment responsibilities.

McFarland's<sup>14</sup> legal status, and in Jan 2002 with the two governments' final agreement on the inclusion of environmental clauses in the second SOFA revision.

The media agenda on the SOFA revision issue also changed sharply (See Figure 2). In December 1990, the U.S. actions peaked on the media agenda, a month before the first SOFA revision was signed. A U.S. soldier's murder of a Korean bar girl in October 1992 made the second spike in November 1992. After a two-and-half-year recess, a series of crimes committed by U.S. soldiers were reported from May 1995 to October 1996. They included murder, rape and riot. There was a three-year recess between November 1996 and November 1999. While the media agenda started to move upward again in August 1999, another U.S. soldier murdered a Korean bar girl in February 2000, which gave a momentum to the issue. The U.S. army was back on the agenda of Korean media in May 2000 (the Maehyang-ni bombing accident) and in July 2000 (the dumping incident).

In summary, the SOFA revision issue rose and fell on the media agenda with a specific reference to crimes committed by individual U.S. soldiers until the Maehyang-ni bombing accident. The bombing accident set the stage for the environmental destruction issue to be ushered in on the media agenda. The dumping incident followed it.

Figure 3 shows how the two issues - the SOFA revision issue and the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue - were related to each other. Before the Maehayng-ni bombing accident, the two issues looked independent of each other. Even when Depleted Uranium was exploded in a general disposal compound by mistake in May 1997, the SOFA revision issue was not on the media agenda. After the Maehyang-ni accident, the two issues fell and rose on the media agenda together with the highest peak in the July 2000 dumping incident. The two environmental cases are trigger events. A trigger event is a cue-to-action that occurs at a point in time and serves to crystallize attention and action regarding an issue's salience (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). They contributed to boosting the media agenda regarding the SOFA revision issue.

*Salience:* Frequency and length of article (RQ3: H1)

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<sup>14</sup> McFarland was accused of dumping Formaldehyde into the Han River.

Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. The two Korean newspapers put more salience in terms of frequency, but less salience in terms of average article length, when the U.S. army was involved. Table 1 summarizes the salience of the environmental destruction issue on military camps by the nationality of army and by the political orientation of newspaper. About 85 percent of the total 231 articles under study covered the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue, which is about five times as many as articles dealing with the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue. The average length of the article, however, is about 30 characters longer when the Korean army was involved (U.S. army, 633.62 characters; Korean army, 667.50 characters). This 30 character difference, however, is not big enough for readers to tell, considering the overall mean of 638.61 characters.

*Thematic framing:* Proportion of thematic sentences per article (RQ3: H2)

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The mean proportion of thematic sentences per article was higher when the Korean army was involved (See Table 2). More thematic sentences mean more context-oriented information in an article. The lower proportion in the U.S. army-related articles indicates that the articles contained less contextual information. This unexpected result may come from the fact that there was no major environmental destruction case related to the Korean army like the Formaldehyde dumping incident. After the toxic chemical dumping was revealed in July 14, 2000, 89 articles covered the incident with 50 articles within a month. Therefore, most articles were daily follow-ups that tended to be short and event-oriented, providing for less contextual information.

*Casual responsibility:* Individual vs. Social (RQ3: H3)

Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The two newspapers attributed more causal responsibility to social entities when the Korean Army was involved (See Table 3). However, all the 31 U.S. army-related articles of individual causal responsibility covered the Formaldehyde dumping incident in which McFarland was identified as the person who issued the order to dump the toxic chemical into the Han River since the incident was first revealed by GKU.

An interesting observation can be made regarding the "no mention" category. About 24 % of the Korean army-related articles did not mention causal responsibility compared to about 5 % of the U.S. army-related articles. This data implies the two newspapers together portrayed the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue more negatively by mentioning causal responsibility more frequently.

*Treatment responsibility: Positive vs. Negative (RQ3: H4-1 and 4-2)*

Hypotheses 4-1 and 4-2 were supported. Among the 197 U.S. army-related articles, 116 articles attributed treatment responsibility to the U.S. army or government, 36 articles to the Korean army or government, and 25 articles to both governments.<sup>15</sup> Twenty articles mentioned no treatment responsibility. Among 116 articles that attributed treatment responsibility to the U.S. army or government, 20 articles (17.2 %) portrayed it positively, 87 articles (75%) negatively, and 9 articles (7.8 %) unclearly. Among 36 articles that attributed treatment responsibility to the Korean army or government, 18 articles (50 %) portrayed it positively, 12 articles (33.3 %) negatively, and 6 articles (16.7 %) unclearly. Among the 25 articles that attributed treatment responsibility to both governments, 3 articles (12 %) portrayed it positively, 15 articles (60 %) negatively, and 7 articles (28%) unclearly. The treatment responsibility taken by the U.S. army or government was predominantly negative (75%), and the treatment responsibility taken by the Korean army or government was positive (50%), and the treatment responsibility taken by both governments was negative (68%) (See Table 4).

Among the 34 Korean army-related articles, 32 articles mentioned treatment responsibility by the army or government. Twenty-one out of the 32 articles (65.6 %) portrayed it positively, and 11 articles (34.4 %) negatively. Eighteen out of the 32 articles attributed treatment responsibility to the army, and 14 articles to the government. The treatment responsibility taken by the army was portrayed balanced. That is, half of the 18 articles portrayed it positively, and the other half negatively. The treatment responsibility taken by the government was portrayed predominantly positive. Twelve articles out of the 14 articles (85.7 %) portrayed it positively, and 2 articles (14.3%)

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<sup>15</sup> A separate category, "both governments," was coded when both governments were mentioned as responsible together.

negatively (See Table 5). It is apparent that the Korean government was portrayed as taking the initiative to solve the environment issue.

*Political Orientation of Newspaper: Pro- vs. Anti-Government (H5-1 and 5-2).*

Hypothesis 5-1 was supported. Among all the 231 army-related environmental destruction articles, 152 articles (65.8%) came from Hankyoreh Shinmun, the anti-government newspaper, and 79 articles (34.2%) from Chosun Ilbo, the pro-government newspaper. This tendency was more apparent when only the U.S. Army was taken into consideration. Among the 197 U.S. army-related environmental destruction articles, 131 articles (66.5 %) came from the anti-government newspaper, and among the 34 Korean army-related articles, 21 articles (61.8%) came from the anti-government paper (See Table 1).

The average length of article was longer in the anti-government newspaper (682.93 characters) than in the pro-government newspaper (553.33 characters). This 130-character difference in length is presumably noticeable, considering the overall mean of 638.21 characters. Unlike findings on the frequency, this tendency regarding length was more apparent when only the Korean army was taken into consideration. The difference in the average article length between the pro- and anti-government newspapers are bigger when the Korean army was involved (310.67 characters) than when the U.S. army was involved (98.73 characters) (See Table 1).

An interesting finding was revealed by charting the percentage of articles and the average article length by the nationality of army and the political orientation of newspaper (See Figures 4 and 5). The percentage of articles decreased in both newspapers when the Korean army was involved. The degree of reduction was almost the same in both newspapers. However, the average article length showed different patterns according to the political orientation of newspaper. That is, when the Korean army was involved, the average article length increased in the anti-government newspaper and decreased in the pro-government newspaper. It is speculated that in terms of frequency, the two newspapers were not different in the relative salience between the U.S. army-related and the Korean army-related environmental destruction issues. In terms of the average article length, the anti-government newspaper gave more salience to

the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue, and the pro-government newspaper gave more salience to the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue.

Hypothesis 5-2 was partially supported. The pro-government newspaper attributed treatment responsibility to the Korean army or government more frequently (22.4%, 13 out of 58 articles) than the anti-government newspaper (19.3%, 23 out of 119 articles). It seems that the pro-government newspaper portrayed the Korean army or government more negatively than the anti-government newspaper by attributing treatment responsibility to the Korean army or government more frequently. However, the percentage by the valence of treatment responsibility (positive, negative, or unclear) indicated the opposite possibility. The percentage of the positive treatment responsibility taken by the Korean army or government is higher in the pro-government newspaper (61.5%, 8 out of 13 articles) than in the anti-government newspaper (43.5%, 10 out of 23 articles). The percentage of the negative treatment responsibility taken by the Korean army or government is lower in the pro-government newspaper (38.5%, 5 out of 13 articles) than in the anti-government newspaper (43.5%, 10 out of 23 articles) (See Table 6). The higher percentage of the overall treatment responsibility may have resulted from the pro-government newspaper's tendency to portray the Korean army or government positively by more frequent "positive" treatment responsibility attribution.

Figure 4 shows the percentage change in the number of articles mentioning the treatment responsibility by the Korean army or government when the U.S. army was involved. It shows that the anti-government newspaper attributed positive and negative treatment responsibility to the Korean army or government with the same proportion. However, more frequent attribution of positive than negative treatment responsibility was made in the pro-government newspaper.

### Conclusion

This study examined (1) the media agenda on the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue, (2) its relation to the media agenda on the SOFA revision over the last 12 years, and (3) how the "us vs. them" meta-frame was employed in the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue. The study employed a comparative approach in order to identify the "us vs. them" meta-frame more clearly by

including the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue in its analysis. The study also examined the difference according to the political orientation of news media.

The comparison of media coverage changes in the two issues - the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue and the SOFA revision issue - revealed that two U.S. army-related environmental incidents - the Maehyang-ni accidental bombing and the Formaldehyde dumping - triggered the media agenda on the SOFA revision. The media agenda on the two issues followed a similar pattern after the Maehyang-ni incident.

Major findings regarding the "us vs. them" meta-frame from hypothesis testing were (1) salience in terms of frequency differed according to the nationality of army involved; (2) it was more likely to frame the Korean army-related environmental destruction issue thematically than the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue; (3) more frequent causal responsibility - both overall and individual - attribution was found when the U.S. army was involved; (4) more frequent positive treatment responsibility attribution to the Korean army or government and more frequent negative treatment responsibility attribution to the U.S. army or government were found in the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue; (5) the Korean government was attributed positive treatment responsibility more frequently when the Korean army was involved than when the U.S. army was involved; and (6) the political orientation of newspaper affected the meta-frame in terms of the average article length and treatment responsibility.

The contribution of this study to agenda-setting and framing studies is twofold. First, the study introduced Van Dijk's news schema to examining the thematic and episodic frames of newspaper articles. The study measured the degree of thematic framing in an article in terms of the relative proportion of thematic sentences instead of dichotomizing each article's frame as thematic or episodic. Further research is needed to see if this new operationalization of thematic framing leads to the same responsibility attribution by readers as in Iyengar's study.

Second, the study clearly showed the role of issue framing on the agenda setting process. The 12-year-old SOFA revision issue could not get on the media agenda in a full shot until the two U.S. army-related environmental incidents were revealed. The two incidents moved the framing focus from individual crimes committed by U.S. soldiers to

environmental destruction on U.S. army camps. This change successfully increased the salience of the SOFA revision issue on the media agenda. It also implies that environmental issues are not purely environmental any more, and often politicized to mobilize the public.

As mentioned earlier, people's risk perception is highly affected by media's portrayal according to the social amplification model. The present study did not measure the public agenda or risk perception regarding the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue. Nor did the study compare real world indicators or physical harms assessed objectively with the public agenda or risk perception. However, it can be speculated that the striking difference in salience between the two army-related environmental destruction issues may have driven higher risk perception when the U.S. army was involved. Coupled with the SOFA revision issue on the media agenda, the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue was given attention from the policy agenda as an urgent issue. The U.S. army-related environmental destruction was perceived as a political rather than an environmental issue at least on the media agenda.

The role of GKU, the local environmental group that revealed the dumpling incident was noteworthy. To time the revelation right before the SOFA revision negotiation was scheduled to resume in August 2000 may have been deliberate, since the two governments failed to reach agreement in September 1996. GKU did not report when the Korean-American civilian who executed McFarland's dumping order reported the case to GKU. But, the dumping incident occurred in February 2000. GKU may have held the revelation until the case could have the most impact on the SOFA revision negotiation.

The present study did not fully support the "us vs.them" meta-frame in international conflict news reporting, especially thematic framing and causal responsibility attribution. This is because the study applied a long time period of 12 years in order to make a comparative analysis possible. Most studies supporting the "us vs. them" meta-frame focused on such specific news events as airline incidents (Entman, 1991) and civilian uprising (Liebes, 1992). Since there was no comparable environmental destruction case committed by the Korean army, the study expanded the

scope from such topical news events as the toxic chemical dumping to the issue of army-related environmental destruction.

The existence of the "us vs. them" meta-frame may be played down as a natural tendency in media's portrayal of international conflicts. In the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issues in South Korea, however, the frame may have contributed to instigating anti-Americanism in South Korea that could not accord to South Korea's national security in the long run.

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Table 1. Frequency and Average Length of articles for the U.S. army-related and the Korean army-related environmental destruction issues.

	U.S. Army-involved	Korean Army-involved	Total
<b>Frequency (# of Articles)</b>			
Pro-Government Paper	66 (83.5%, 33.5%) <sup>a</sup>	13 (16.5%, 38.2%) <sup>a</sup>	79 (34.2%) <sup>c</sup>
Anti-Government Paper	131 (86.2%, 66.5%) <sup>a</sup>	21 (13.8%, 61.8%) <sup>a</sup>	152 (65.8%) <sup>c</sup>
Total	197 (85.3%) <sup>b</sup>	34 (14.7%) <sup>b</sup>	231
<b>Length of Article (Average # of characters per article)</b>			
Pro-Government Paper	568.64	475.62	553.33
Anti-Government Paper	666.37	786.29	682.93
Total	633.62	667.50	638.61

Note. <sup>a</sup> (row %, column %)<sup>b</sup> (row %)<sup>c</sup> (column %)

Table 2. Mean proportion of thematic sentences per article according to the nationality of army

	U.S. Army-involved	Korean Army-involved	Total
<b>Proportion of thematic sentences (mean)</b>			
Pro-Government Paper			
Anti-Government Paper	61.36 %	65 %	61.96 %
Total	66.24 %	80.38 %	68.20 %
	64.61 %	74.50 %	66.06 %

Table 3. Number of articles that assign causal responsibility to individuals or social entities

	U.S. Army-involved	Korean Army-involved	Total
Individual	31 (15.7%) <sup>a</sup>	0	31
Social	157 (79.7%) <sup>a</sup>	26 (76.5%) <sup>a</sup>	183
No mention	9 (4.6%) <sup>a</sup>	8 (23.5%) <sup>a</sup>	17
Total	197	34	231

Note. <sup>a</sup> (column %)

Table 4. Number of articles that assign positive or negative treatment responsibility - U.S. Army-involved

Treatment Responsibility	U.S. Army	U.S. Govern-ment	U.S. subtotal (%)	Korean Army	Korean Govern-ment <sup>a</sup>	Korean Subtotal (%)	Both Govern-ment (%)	Subtotal
Positive	19	1	20 (17.2) <sup>b</sup>	1	17	18 (50) <sup>b</sup>	3 (12) <sup>b</sup>	41
Negative	85	2	87 (75) <sup>b</sup>	2	13	15 (41.7) <sup>b</sup>	17 (68) <sup>b</sup>	119
Unclear	6	3	9 (7.8) <sup>b</sup>	1	2	3 (8.3) <sup>b</sup>	5 (20) <sup>b</sup>	17
Total	110	6	116	4	32	36	25	177 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup> The judicial and legislative branches as well as the administrative branch are included.<sup>b</sup> (Column %)<sup>c</sup> Twenty articles mentioned no treatment responsibility.

Table 5. Number of articles that assign positive or negative treatment responsibility - Korean Army-involved

Treatment Responsibility	Army (%)	Government <sup>a</sup> (%)	Subtotal (%)
Positive	9 (50) <sup>b</sup>	12 (85.7) <sup>b</sup>	21 (65.6) <sup>b</sup>
Negative	9 (50) <sup>b</sup>	2 (14.3) <sup>b</sup>	11 (34.4) <sup>b</sup>
Unclear	0	0	0
Total	18	14	32 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup> The judicial and legislative branches as well as the administrative branch are included.

<sup>b</sup>(column %)

<sup>c</sup> Two articles mentioned no treatment responsibility.

Table 6. Number of articles that assign positive or negative treatment responsibility by the political orientation of newspaper - U.S. Army-involved

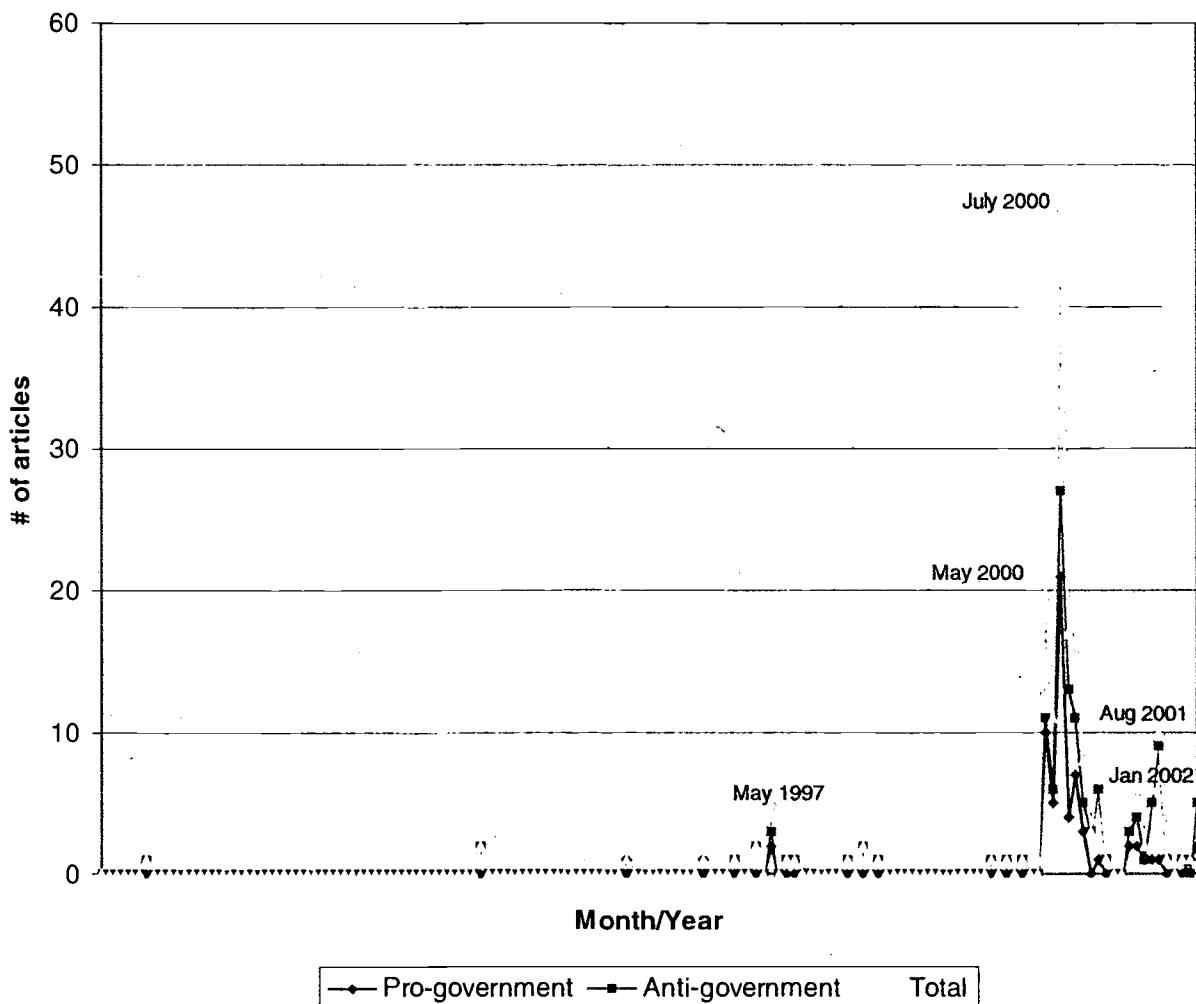
Treatment Responsibility	Pro-government paper				Anti-government paper			
	US army or government (%)	Korean army or government (%)	Both governments (%)	Pro-government subtotal (%)	US army or government (%)	Korean army or government (%)	Both governments (%)	Anti-government subtotal (%)
Positive	10 (28.6) <sup>a</sup>	8 (61.5) <sup>a</sup>	1 (10) <sup>a</sup>	19 (32.8) <sup>a</sup>	10 (12.3) <sup>a</sup>	10 (43.5) <sup>a</sup>	2 (13.4) <sup>a</sup>	22 (18.4) <sup>a</sup>
Negative	22 (62.8) <sup>a</sup>	5 (38.5) <sup>a</sup>	8 (80) <sup>a</sup>	35 (60.3) <sup>a</sup>	65 (80.2) <sup>a</sup>	10 (43.5) <sup>a</sup>	9 (60) <sup>a</sup>	84 (70.6) <sup>a</sup>
Unclear	3 (8.6) <sup>a</sup>	0	1 (10) <sup>a</sup>	4 (6.9) <sup>a</sup>	6 (7.5) <sup>a</sup>	3 (13) <sup>a</sup>	4 (26.6) <sup>a</sup>	13 (11) <sup>a</sup>
Total	35 (60.3) <sup>b</sup>	13 (22.4) <sup>b</sup>	10 (17.3) <sup>b</sup>	58 <sup>c</sup>	81 (68.1) <sup>b</sup>	23 (19.3) <sup>b</sup>	15 (12.6) <sup>b</sup>	119 <sup>c</sup>

Note. <sup>a</sup>(column %)

<sup>b</sup>(row %)

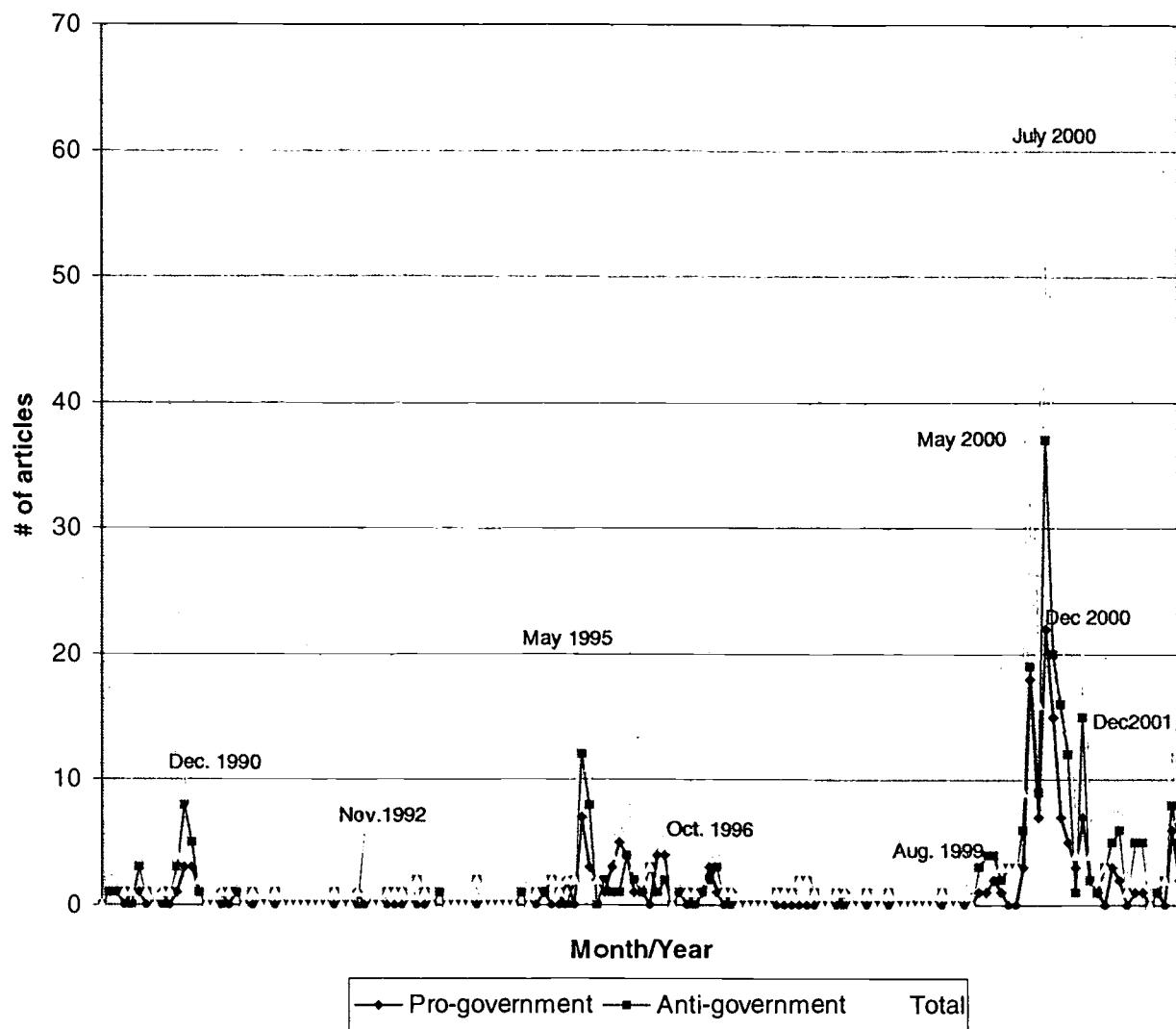
<sup>c</sup>Eight articles from the pro-government newspaper and 12 articles from the anti-government newspaper mentioned no treatment responsibility.

Figure 1. The U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue on the media agenda from January 1990 to January 2002



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Figure 2. The SOFA revision on the media agenda from January 1990 to January 2002



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Figure 3. The SOFA revision issue and the U.S. army-related environmental destruction issue on the media agenda from January 1990 to January 2002

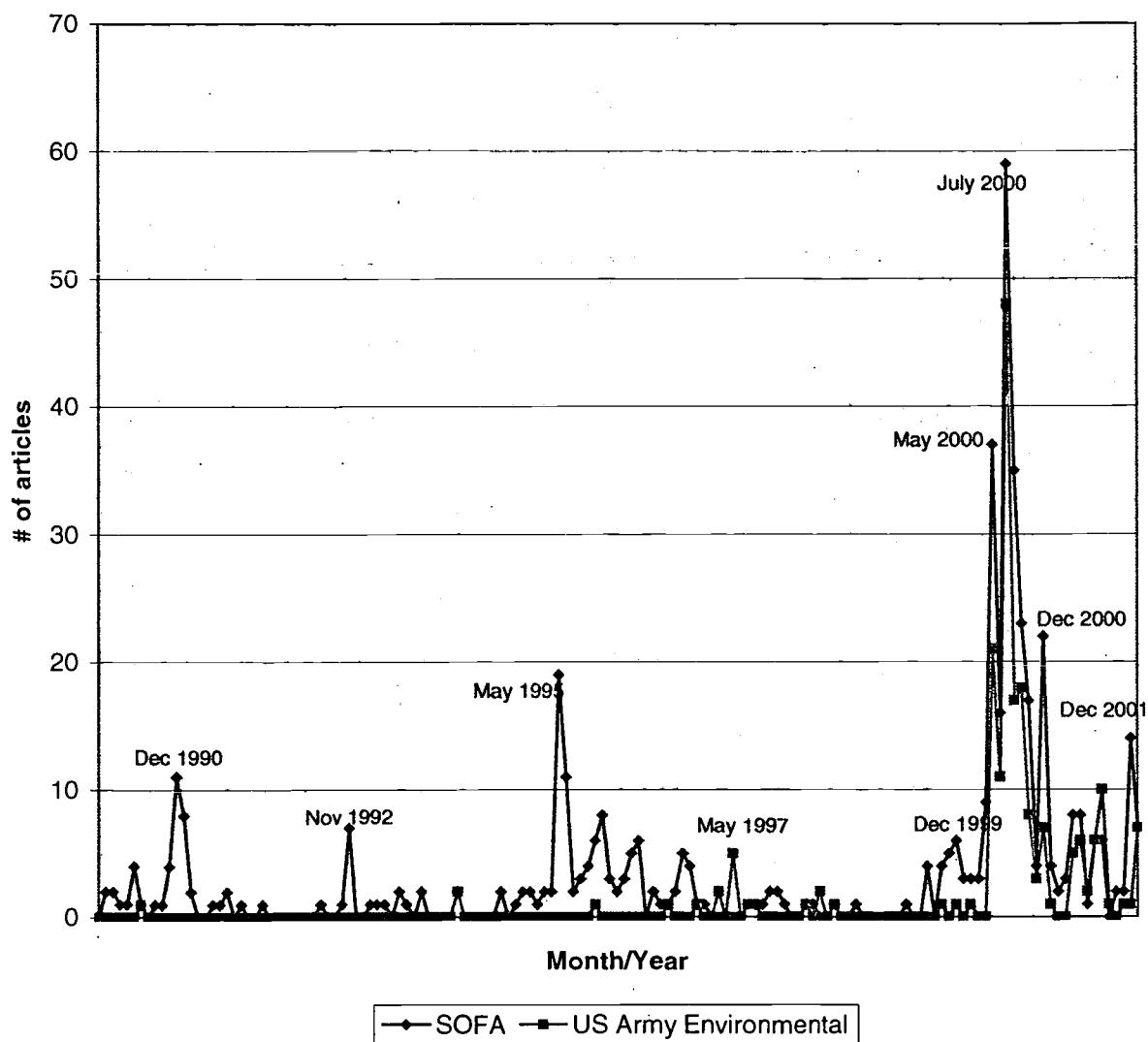


Figure 4. Percentage of articles by the nationality of army and the political orientation of newspaper

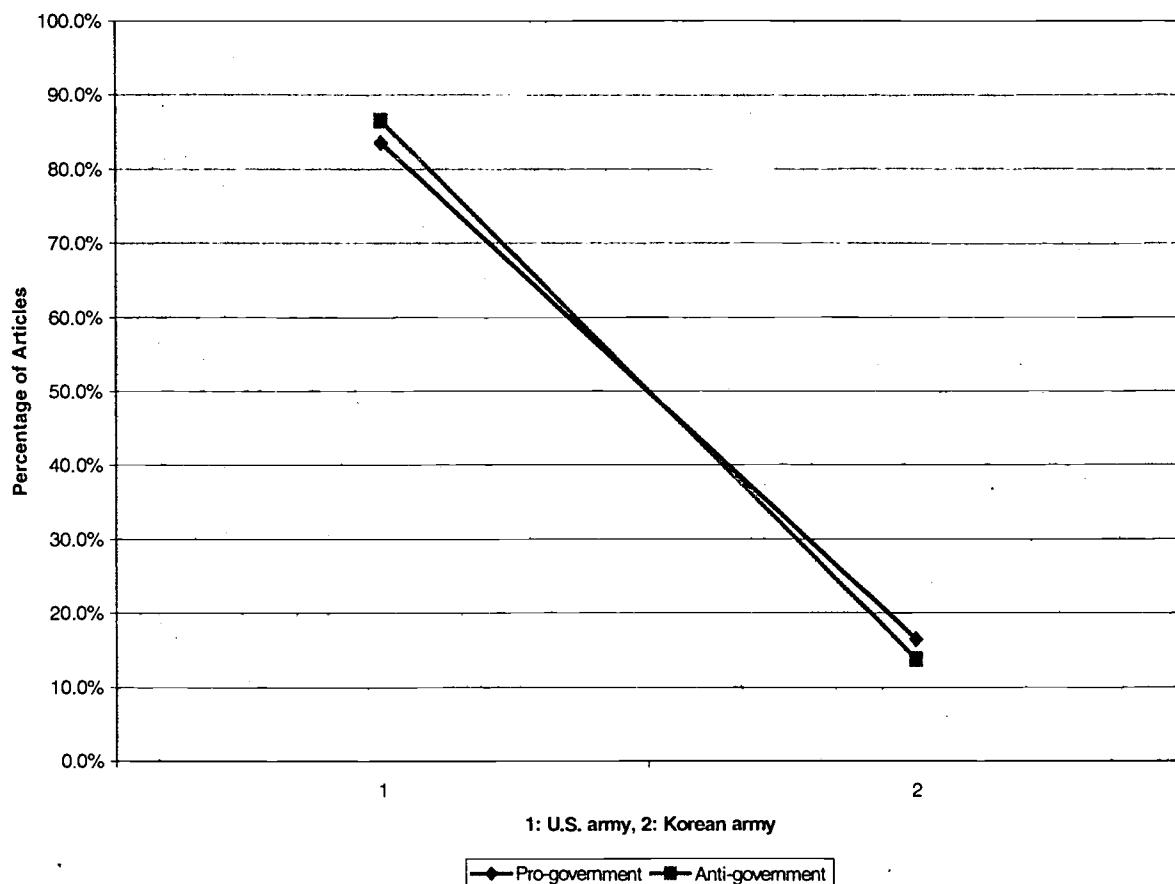


Figure 5. Average article length by the nationality of army and the political orientation of newspaper

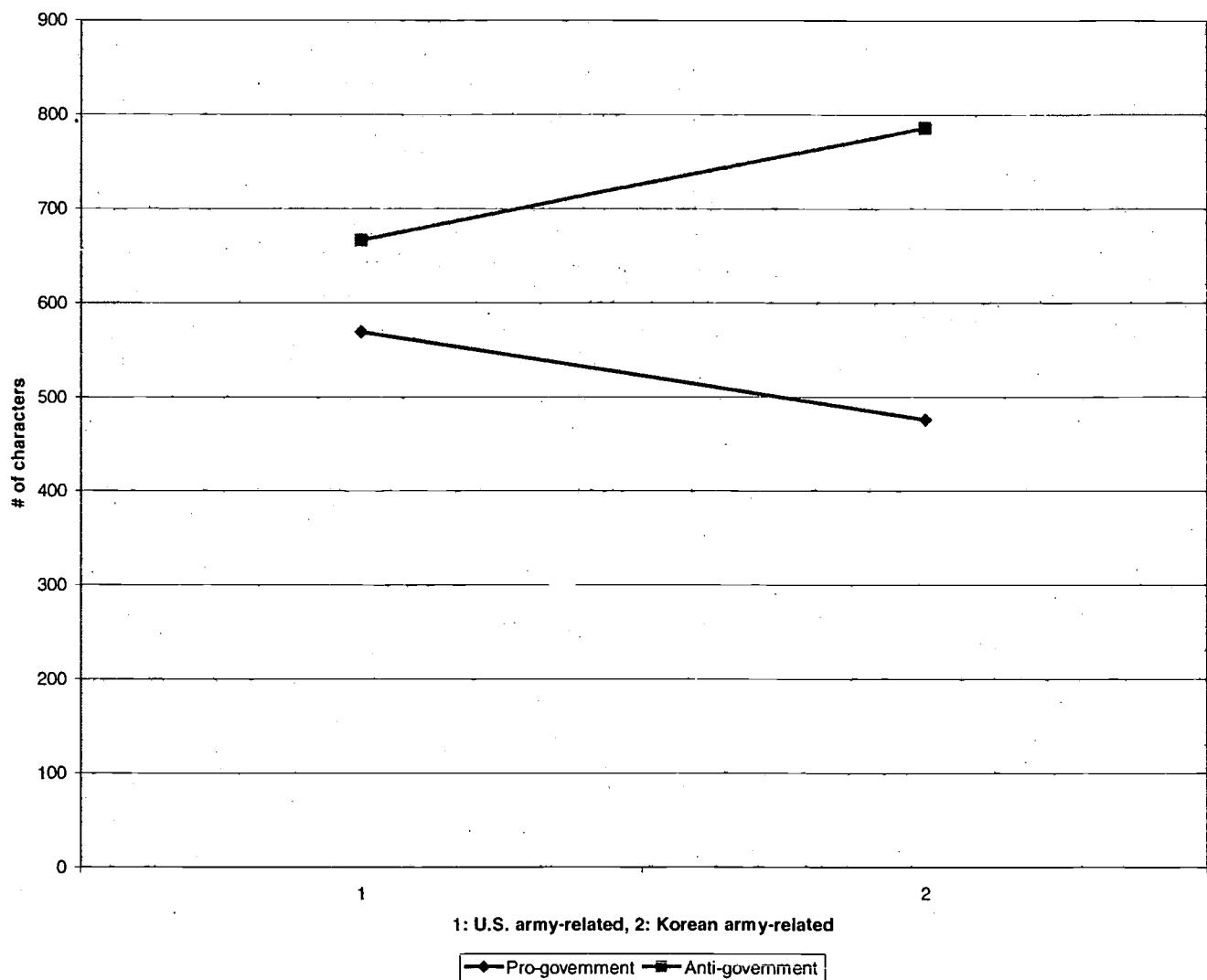
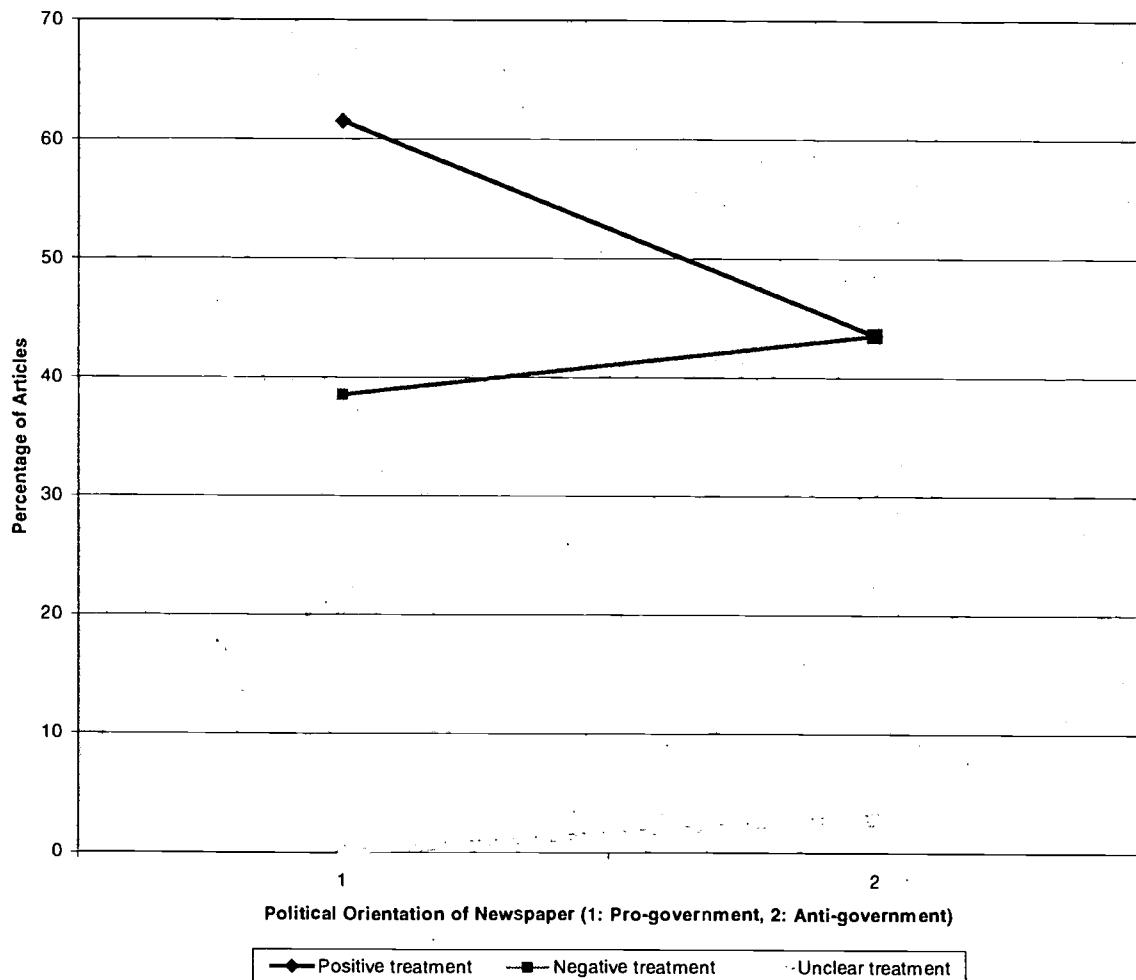


Figure 6. Percentage of articles mentioning treatment responsibility of the Korean army or government - U.S. army involved



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## Appendix A. Categories for Causal and Treatment Responsibility

**Causal Responsibility**

Individual	1. Army 2. Administrative 3. Judicial 4. Legislative 5. Activist 6. Expert 7. Citizen 8. Others
Social	9. Army 10. Administrative 11. Judicial 12. Legislative 13. Activist 14. Expert 15. Citizen 16. Others

**Treatment Responsibility**

		Positive	Negative	Unclear
Korean	1. Army 2. Administrative 3. Judicial 4. Legislative 5. Activist 6. Expert 7. Citizen 8. Others	P1 P2 P3 P4 P5 P6 P7 P8	N1 N2 N3 N4 N5 N6 N7 N8	U1 U2 U3 U4 U5 U6 U7 U8
U.S.	9. Army 10. Administrative 11. Judicial 12. Legislative 13. Activist 14. Expert 15. Citizen 16. Others	P9 P10 P11 P12 P13 P14 P15 P16	N9 N10 N11 N12 N13 N14 N15 N16	U9 U10 U11 U12 U13 U14 U15 U16

Running head: U.S. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

International News Flow and the U.S. News Media:  
A Model Proposed from a Critical Review of the Literature

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### Abstract

This paper reviews international news flow and coverage studies with two aims: (1) to synthesize various factors influencing international news flow; and (2) to characterize the process of selecting international news in the U.S. news media. Dividing those factors into two patterns, deviance-oriented and relevance-oriented perspectives, this review of the literature proposes a model of international news selection by the U.S. news media.

## Introduction

A number of studies on international news flow have been presented since Galtung and Ruge (1964) presented their idea—"factors"—which influenced international news flow. Based on the notion that international news plays an important role in determining the ways of seeing the world,<sup>1</sup> those studies have developed a framework to theorize factors influencing international news flow. Furthermore, through identifying factors influencing international news flow, the studies have attempted to provide the pictures of how international news flow is structured and the ideas of how the "factors" influence the structure. As one of the nations that dominate international news flow, the United States have been focused by many of the studies, and the characteristics of the U.S. news media are unveiled, either like or unlike other countries. While some of the factors can be applied to the United States just as are other countries, the U.S. news media have their own criteria to select international news. As Tunstall (1992) indicated that the U.S. news media color their international news in an American way, the U.S. news media use international news to create a U.S. version of international reality, which constructs the images of the United States.

This paper attempts to review international news flow and coverage studies,<sup>2</sup> which particularly focus on the U.S. news media, in order to understand how the U.S. news media select some international news over others. In terms of factors determining international news, all the findings from both international news and coverage studies should be reviewed in studies on international news flow. The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to synthesize various factors influencing international news flow; (2) and to characterize the process of selecting international news in the U.S. news media. In this

sense, it could provide a further understanding of how the U.S. media digest and disseminate international news as related to the notion of factors influencing international news.

### Factors of International News Flow

In the study of the structure and flow of international news, Galtung and Ruge (1964) developed an idea of "factors" influencing international news to figure out how the audiences perceive international events as international reality within a theoretical framework. However, since the Galtung and Ruge began their international news flow study with an individual level of perception of reality, Rosengren (1974) labeled the Galtung and Ruge (1964) theory as a psychological perspective, and suggested that it should be replaced within a broader perspective that was based on economic and political approach. As a predictor of international news coverage, Rosengren (1974) advocated that extra-media factors such as political and economic variables worked better than psychological ones. Nnaemeka and Richstad (1974) also noted that extra-media factors were ideologically strong to shape not only editorial decisions but also reader's perceptions of international news. After these studies a number of research on international news flow have been conducted, employing a variety of factors as determinants determining the structure and flow of international news: population, geographical proximity, economic factor, presence of international news agencies, cultural proximity, deviance, world system, and the U.S. role.

#### Population

Some studies considered population a factor of international news flow. As a predictor, population suggested that the more people who live in which an event happens, the more

the event is likely to be covered. Choosing two elite newspapers, the New York Times and the Guardian, Hopples (1982) compared these two newspapers' international news coverage during the first half of 1979, focusing on the volume and proportion of news about the external world in each country and newspaper. The most covered countries were ranked as follows: the United States, Israel, China, and U.S.S.R. Although Hopples found a trend between the rank of the covered countries and the rank of countries of population, as Hopples concluded, population always came with trade factor as a factor of international news flow.

Using international newspapers and periodical trade data in Commodity Trade Statistics published by the United Nations, Kim and Barnett (1996) attempted to figure out what the global structure of international news flow was and what the determinants of the structure of the international news flow network were. Their multiple regression analysis revealed that population, as well as GNP per capita and latitude, was "significantly related to the centrality of the international news flow network" (p. 343). Population as a predictor of international news flow, however, was valid not only when it goes with GNP per capita, but also when it is applied to the countries located in the Northern hemisphere (Kim & Barnett, 1996). In other words, wealthy countries, not only which have large populations but also which are located in the Northern hemisphere, tend to be at the center of the structure of international news flow.

#### Geographical Proximity

Basically an idea of geographical distance in international news flow suggested that the closer an event is, the more important it is deemed (Rosengren, 1970). In a comparison between Israeli and U.S. newspapers, however, Hicks and Gordon (1974) found little

evidence of geographical proximity between Israeli and U. S. newspapers. Identifying two perspectives, physical and functional proximities, in geographical proximity, Hicks and Gordon pointed out that "functional proximity, rather than physical proximity, is a determinant" (p. 644). Physical proximity referred to distance in terms of miles between two countries whereas functional proximity meant social distance such as geo-politics and economics between two countries with modern communication technologies.

Physical proximity itself did not affect international new flow; rather, with functional proximity it played a crucial role in distinguishing the events covered from those not covered. Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger (1987) examined the coverage of international news reported by the New York Times and the television networks [CBS, ABC, and NBC]. They supported Hicks and Gordon (1974) study, saying that according to the place—where an international event happened—in which modern communication technologies were available, the event was then covered. That is, geographical proximity influenced international news selection with communication technologies connecting a country with another country.

Although communication technologies linked nations together within a world network in the post-Cold War era, geographical proximity still influenced the structure of international news flow. Kim and Barnett (1996) noted that their cluster analysis suggested that the world-system theory captured the complicated structure of international news flow. From a geographical point of view, European and North American countries were located at the core of the structure of the worldwide international news flow while most of African, Asian, Latin American, and Oceania countries were located at the periphery. It is important to note that geographical

proximity is closely related to language. Kim and Barnett showed that the countries that shared the same language and were physically proximate were likely to exchange newspapers and periodicals more than countries that did not share the same language or were physically distant. While language worked in creating linguistic boundaries or ties among countries, geographical proximity decayed the idea of geographical proximity. As a result of it, geographical proximity was not considered as important as economic factors in international news flow (Chang et al., 1987; Hicks & Gordon, 1974; Kim & Barnett, 1996).

#### Economic Factor

As Kim and Barnett (1996) pointed out GNP was related to the centrality of the structure of international news flow along with latitude and population, Rosengren (1977) discussed that trade, population, and geographical proximity, which were packaged in an extra-media variable, determined the structure and flow of international news. In a comparative news flow study between the United States and Canada, however, Robinson and Sparkes (1976) pointed out that trade, GNP, and population did not work as a predictor of international news flow in the U.S. newspapers, even though they found the data supporting trade as factor of international news flow in the Canadian newspapers. Selecting 12 issues published in 1972 in each of 35 newspapers across the world, de Verneil (1977) examined the relationship between the extent of international news coverage and the level of international economic and communication relations in various countries. The result showed that there was no correlations between amounts of international news coverage and the trade and communication variables; rather, it indicated that international news coverage was traced to four contrasting interaction

carried out within each country. In the study, de Verneil (1977) categorized countries in the world into four groups: (1) model; (2) alternative; (3) variant; and (4) divergent, based on the correlation between their patterns of international news reporting and their patterns of international economic, communication, and demographical relationships.<sup>3</sup> The United States was categorized into the “variant” group, whose the most important independent variable was a communication variable; on the other hand, which was not influenced by trading data.

However, Wu (2000) criticized de Verneil (1977) study, arguing trade, geographical proximity, and communication relations were found the most helpful to international news flow studies. Wu, furthermore, indicated that trade was the leading factor of news coverage when the whole world was concerned. Through an examination on the U.S. business magazines: Business Week, Forbes, and Fortune, from 1964 through 1988, Mayo and Pasadeos (1991) analyzed how the international foci of the U.S. business magazines had been changed. The study found that these U.S. business magazines put their foci on some Asian countries, which were called “Asian Tigers,” in the proportion to those countries’ economic growths. According to Wu (2000), one aspect of the reason when economic factor was the best predictor of international news flow was that, on the era of the post-Cold War, economic interest played a central role in seeing other countries rather than ideological perspectives. In a similar sense, Wasburn (1997) viewed the post-Cold War world as an international circumstance where “power depends as much on the ability of a nation’s banks and corporations to capture market share and defeat foreign trade rivals as it does on the capabilities of its military power” (p. 191).

### Presence of International News Agencies

The other aspect of the reason why the economic factor worked as a predictor of international news flow was explained with the presence of international news agencies (Wu, 2000). Since it was much more economical to use news copy provided by news services than to send correspondents to foreign countries, the presence and size of the news agencies stationed in a given country were important in determining the amount of international news on that country. In a comparison of the direction and volumes of news exchange between Canada and the United States, Robinson and Sparkes (1976) found few technological differences between the two countries. In order to explain an imbalance between the two countries, the presence of international news agencies could be considered a factor causing the imbalance between Canada and the United States. The global news wire services such as the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Agence France-Press, and Reuters dominated international news market as wholesalers, selling their products to ninety agencies in the United States and Canada (Robinson and Sparkes, 1976).

Riffe, Aust, Gibson, Viall, and Yi (1993) conducted a content analysis on the coverage of the New York Times from 1969 to 1990. In terms of amount of international news stories, the study found that the New York Times provided its readers with less international news than it did twenty years earlier. Riffe et al. (1993) also examined second-hand or borrowed news—"news disseminated by one news medium and picked up and cited in another" (p. 638). The results showed that about one in five international news stories contained second-hand or borrowed news and the number of borrowed news

increased. Moreover, most of the second-hand and borrowed international news came from the two U.S. wire news services, AP and UPI.

Mayer (1989) also pointed out that “the Big Four control the bulk of international news” from the perspective of neoimperialism in global news flow (p. 256). The dominance of the Big Four news syndicates allowed the United States, France, and the Great Britain to carve out their hegemonic spheres of international influence. In a similar sense, Masmoudi (1979) also argued that the influence of the “Big Four” Western news agencies was the major problem of the imbalances in international news flows. Indicating that it was necessary to add TASS (the Soviet News Agency) to the “Big Four,” however, Alleyne and Wagner (1993) noted that the “Big Five” news services were always forced to update their technologies to survive as news agencies.

In the study of international news in cyberspace, Kang and Choi (1999) unveiled that inequity in the structure of international news flow should be interpreted as technological dependency. The technological resources that could make the distribution of information possible were available to only the limited developed powerful nations. Hicks and Gordon (1974) also argued that television coverage of international events was more likely controlled by technological problems such as availability of camera crew and cost of transmission of stories than geographical ideas.<sup>4</sup>

#### Cultural Proximity

Kim and Barnett (1996) suggested that the world was divided into some geographical-linguistic groups in terms of what language they use with “a European-North American group at the center and Chinese, Portuguese, Greek-Tuck, Latin American-Spanish, Middle Asian-Indian, North African, and Overseas French groups at the periphery” (p.

346). Although, as Kim and Barnett (1996) indicated, language comes within the context of geographical proximity as a determinant of international news flow, it also influences international news flow in terms of cultural proximity. Examining two types of Canadian daily newspapers, English-language and French-language newspapers, Kariel and Rosenvall (1983) mentioned that each type of newspapers chose which news to print, reflecting the cultural affinities of its readers. French-language newspapers were culturally biased toward news items from France whereas English-language newspapers to those from the United Kingdom.

Cultural proximity as well as economic factor plays an important role in determining what news is covered. Chang et al. (1987) viewed international news as products ideologically made by journalists under the pressures from economic and cultural forces. As the foreign media covered the United States in a way of reflecting cultural proximity,<sup>5</sup> the U.S. media viewed relevance to the United States as newsworthiness. Chang et al. (1987) attempted to identify the factors distinguishing international events that got covered in the U.S. mass media from those that did not. The study showed that, in the U.S. mass media, involvement of the United States in the events was the most important predictor of international new coverage for the New York Times; moreover, it was also the second most important, while normative deviance was the most important, for the TV networks. Chang et al. concluded that "news involving the United States was reported more often than news not involving the United States" (p. 411). Focusing on the criteria of gatekeepers' selection, Chang and Lee (1992) conducted a survey to examine what criteria the U.S. editors employed to select some international news over others. Their findings also indicated that U.S. involvement was one of the

most important elements for the U.S. editors in the process of selecting international news. Chang and Lee, furthermore, suggested the three other factors as important as U.S. involvement in editors' selection of international news: threat to the United States and the world order, anticipated readers' interest, and timeliness.

Hicks and Gordon (1974), in a comparison between Israeli and U.S. newspapers, pointed out that the U.S. newspapers published more international news involving the United States than the Israeli newspapers covered involving their country. Naming the factor "ethnocentrism," they noted that ethnocentrism and elitism played crucial roles in determining international news in the U.S. news media. Although Galtung and Ruge (1964) explored the idea of elite nations—the nations that were considered to be covered more often than other nations on the psychological level, Robinson and Sparkes (1976) viewed elitism as the best predictor of international news between the United States and Canadian press. Since "Canada in contrast to the United States is not an elite nation either in terms of world trade or power" (p. 215), Canada was paid less attention to than was the United States (Robinson & Sparkes, 1976).

Based on the list of factors determining international news flow, which Galtung and Ruge (1964) advocated, Peterson (1981) employed Time magazine's coverage to examine the seven news factors influencing the selection of international news for newspapers: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, personal and national elitism, and negativity. The findings indicated that Time magazine paid attention to elite and meaningful status, excluding many of the small-status countries. Peterson pointed out that Western news coverage of many Third World countries could be explained by the fact that events involving these countries lacked news factors such as meaningfulness and

elite rank. Therefore, the process of selecting news on Third World countries was criticized as what Peterson called "the basis for a more sympathetic posture by American policy makers (p. 160).

### Deviance

For the U.S. mass media, deviance is an important predictor of selecting international news. Shoemaker, Chang, and Brendlinger (1987) attempted to conceptualize the construct of deviance in order to explain "what underlying construct ties the indicators together into a meaningful 'newsworthiness' package" and "why such content should be important to journalists and society" (p. 349). They tested three kinds of deviance—statistical, potential for social change, and normative. Statistical deviance was the most effective in differentiating the events that were covered from those not covered whereas the other two deviances such as normative one and potential social changes played crucial roles in maintaining the status quo (Shoemaker et al., 1987). Their study found that international events covered by the mass media in the United States were more deviant than those events not covered. In the same year, Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger (1987) published another study examining determinants of international news coverage in the U.S. media. This study also argued that normative deviance of an event and potential for social change along with relevance to the United States and geographical distance functioned as predictors in distinguishing between covered events and non-covered events. Normative deviance and potential for social change could be seen to characterize the U.S. media as crisis-oriented. "Crisis and conflicts are closely related to norms and social changes" (Chang et al., 1987, p. 411).

The crisis-oriented approach used by the U.S. media when covering international events was also pointed out by Larson (1979). The Larson study found the two differences of the coverage between developing and developed countries: (1) Third World countries were especially covered with more crisis stories than were developed countries; and (2) Third World countries received less coverage than developing countries. Taking a look at the coverage of two U.S. wire services, AP and UPI, Weaver and Wilhoit (1981) analyzed the amount and quality of news about foreign lands. The data of the study showed the coverage of developing countries tended to be stories about non-political crimes, religions, and human interests and odd happenings, compared with the developed countries. The U.S. news agencies focused on conflicts and crisis when covering the developing or Third World countries, even though the coverage on the developed countries was also emphasized on political and military activity and crimes. Weaver and Wilhoit (1981) concluded that news values among Western journalists might be a more fundamental and central consideration to international news flow studies than the differences between the coverage of less developed countries and more developed countries. Moreover, focusing on the U.S. coverage of foreign disasters, Belle (2000) examined what variables in the disaster coverage were important. The study found that the number of people killed was the most crucial variable of all the variables tested such as the power, democracy, press freedom, wealthy, and the presence of U.S. tourists.<sup>6</sup>

Mayer (1989) argued that Third World newspapers also reflected the news values of Western prestige dailies in terms of which news to select. Examining the most influential newspapers of Latin American and Africa, Mayer advocated “news dependency” (p. 243)—developing countries are dependent upon the West for

international news. Almost half of international news in the Latin American newspapers was carried by the American agencies combined while the former British colonies got their international news from the British wire services and the former French colonies obtained their international reports from the French wire services. "Periphery-to-Center and Center-to-Periphery vertical flows" were significant within each imperial sphere (Mayer, 1989, p. 260).

### World-System

Whereas the dependency theory figured out the center and periphery vertical international news flow between developing and developed countries, the world-system perspective argued the imbalances among countries, adding semiperiphery countries to the core and periphery countries. As one of the popular methods in the studies on international news flow, some scholars attempted to capture the structure and process of international news flow within the context of the global network, employing a network analysis—"a set of research procedures for identifying structures in systems, based on the relations among its components" (Kim & Barnett, 1996, p. 331). In a network analysis for international news flow, while nations are considered as nodes, the relationships between nations are seen as the number of international news exchanges. As pointing out communicational dependency in the structure of international news flow, Kim and Barnett (1996) argued that Western industrialized countries were located at the position in which they produced and sold international news whereas the peripheral countries consumed and relied on their international news from the core countries.

Chang (1998) also conducted a network analysis on the 1996 WTO coverage of Reuters, the London-based international news wire service, in order to figure out why

countries were covered the way they were. The findings indicated that few core nations had chances to be in the news much higher than did many of countries that are located at the semiperiphery and periphery, even though “the flow and coverage of international news may not recognize national boundaries in the age of informational technology” (Chang, 1998, p. 557). While he characterized international news flow as a game keeping poor countries out, Chang concluded that “[A]ll countries are not created equal to be news in the structure and possesses of international communication”<sup>7</sup> (p. 557).

Kang and Choi (1999) examined the coverage of Clarinet, an Internet news service, during 25 days in 1997 to figure out the structure of cross-posting patterns of international news in cyberspace. The study supported the Kim and Barnett (1996) finding that inequality in the structure of international news flow and coverage should be interpreted as dependency in the world-system perspective. Furthermore, Kang and Choi (1999) concluded that a very few powerful countries with technological resources exercised the dominant power in the world system because they maintained the structure of international communication, of which international news was part.<sup>8</sup> In the age of information technology,<sup>9</sup> the structure of international communication—where countries were located, showed a clearer picture to see the power-relations in international news than literally geographical location (Chang, 1998; Kang & Choi; 1999; Kim & Barnett, 1996).

#### The U.S. Role

Some scholars characterized the U.S. news media in terms of their concern with a world leader role the United States should play. While Hopples (1982) viewed the U.S. newspapers as being primarily concerned with the other superpowers, Gans (1979), in his

landmark study, identified a pattern of how the U.S. news media found newsworthiness as related to the U.S. role in the world: “American activities in a foreign country” (p. 30). The roles the United States plays in the world can also be a factor determining international news flow in the U.S. news media. Oldendick and Bardes (1982) examined how both general Americans and elite people saw the U.S. foreign policies. The study showed that even general Americans like the elite people believed that the United States should be a leader in solving world problems. Oldendick and Bardes found that the U.S. media tended to see the United States as a leader of global economy, global politics, and the freedom world.

The factor making what the United States does in a foreign country newsworthy can be explained with the strongest positions in which the United States is located in the structure of international news flow. The U.S. sole superpower allows the U.S. news media to make their international news sort of American taste. Riffle et al. (1993) characterized the trend of the U.S. international news coverage as “an effort to suit the provincial taste of American readers” (p. 644). Tunstall (1992) pointed out that “the U.S. news media in general tend to favor the ‘home news abroad’ story” (p. 98). This is, the U.S. news media tend to find their newsworthiness in the images of strong America. This “strong,” particularly in the U.S. news media coverage of international news, means a leadership in the world. For instance, examining the coverage of Hong Kong when Hong Kong was transferred to China in 1997, Lee, Pan, Chan, and So (2001) found that the U.S. media covered the takeover, indicating that the coverage supported that the United States should play a “new guardian role of Hong Kong” (p. 354). The U.S. news media reported the event, implying that the United States took over the guardian responsibility

from the Britain. In short, being sensitive to the role of the United States in the world, how the United States selected some international news over others relied largely on the strengths of the United States to meet the audiences' interest.

### Summary and Implications

Each factor examined above cannot be identified as a single discrete factor influencing international news flow; rather, they are closely related to each other as factors determining international news flow. However, with regard to the process of how the United States selects some international news over others, two patterns, one relevance-oriented and the other deviance-oriented, can be identified. The relevance-oriented pattern consists of those factors that include geographical proximity (Chang et al., 1987; Hicks & Gordon, 1974; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Rosengren, 1974), presence of international news agencies (Masmoudi, 1979; Robinson & Sparkes, 1976; Wu, 2000), cultural proximity (Chang et al., 1987; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Mayer, 1989), and world-system (Chang, 1998; Kang & Choi, 1999; Kim & Barnett, 1996). The deviance-oriented pattern is made up of those factors that include population (Hopples, 1982; Kim & Barnett, 1996), economic factor (de Verneil, 1977; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Mayo & Pasadeos, 1991; Robinson & Sparkes, 1976; Rosengren, 1977; Wu, 2000), the U.S. role (Gans, 1979; Hopples, 1982; Lee et al., 2001; Riffle et al., 1993; Tunstall, 1992), and deviance (Belle, 2000; Chang et al., 1987; Larson, 1979; Mayer, 1989; Shoemaker et al., 1987; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1981).

Since this paper reviewed some international news flow studies dealing with the news media in other countries along with the U.S. news media, some of the factors might be seen as the common ones predicting international news flow in many countries.

However, in a case of the U.S. news media, even those common factors predicting international news flow can be recognized within the context of relevance and deviance to the United States.

In the relevance-oriented pattern, geographical proximity indicates the closer an international event is to the United States, the more likely it is covered by the U.S. news media. Cultural proximity also argues the culturally closer a foreign country is where an event happens, the more likely it is covered by the U.S. news media. Furthermore, as factors such as presence of international news agencies and the world system figured out a dependency nature of international news, those countries that are dependent upon the United States in terms of technology and imperialism tend to be covered more often are the countries that have few relations with the United States.

With regard to the deviance-oriented pattern, Chang et al. (1987) pointed out that "deviance creates a common focus for group emotion against threats to the status quo; it clarifies the rules for everyone else without their actually testing the rules themselves; it serves as a warning of weaknesses in the system" (p. 354). Factors such as population and economic factors are seen as deviance that threatens the United States. As population increases in a country, the volume and power of trading in the country also increases. Population and economy should be a threat, especially in the post-Cold War, where economic power can be considered within the context of military and political powers (Wasburn, 1997; Wu, 2000). Furthermore, the leadership role of the United States in the world is also a factor that is sensitive to deviance in other countries. The factor shows that the U.S. news media are concerned with the world order, which centralizes the

United States in the world; in other words, the factor makes the United States a social justice in the world, seeing itself as a standard to distinguish good from evil.

Although relevance and deviance might appear to conflict as news values, they are indeed the same kind of predictors of international news, centralizing the United States in the world order. With the relevance-oriented perspective, how relevant either an international event or a foreign country is to the United States becomes more newsworthy to be selected; on the other hand, with the deviance-oriented perspective, how deviant either an international event or a foreign country is to the United States becomes more newsworthy to be chosen. In other words, letting the United States locate at the center of the process to select international news, on the one hand the closer those relevant factors are to the United States, the more likely they are selected; on the other hand, the farther those deviant factors are from the United States, the more likely they are selected.

How the U.S. news media select international news over others can be considered as the reflection of the United States itself, deflecting international events the way they occur.<sup>10</sup> Reporting on those stories that are deviant or relevant to the United States, the U.S. news media legitimize the United States. Covering deviant events in foreign countries, the U.S. news media reflect how healthy societies in the United States are (e.g., Chang et al., 1987; Shoemaker et al., 1987); at the same time, with reporting relevance to the United States, they also reinforce the belief that the United States is representative of the world (e.g., Chang et al., 1987; Chang & Lee, 1992). While Shoemaker et al. (1987) pointed out that international news in the U.S. mass media works in maintaining the status quo, “a hallmark of hegemony” (p. 363), Lee et al., (2001) characterized it as “ideological packages” (p. 352). After all, the U.S. new media conduct a process of

selecting international news in order to construct the image of the United States, and in turn, they shape the ways of seeing the United States.

Therefore, these two patterns defined from the factors derived from previous studies suggest a model of U.S international news selection (See Figure 1, p. 22):

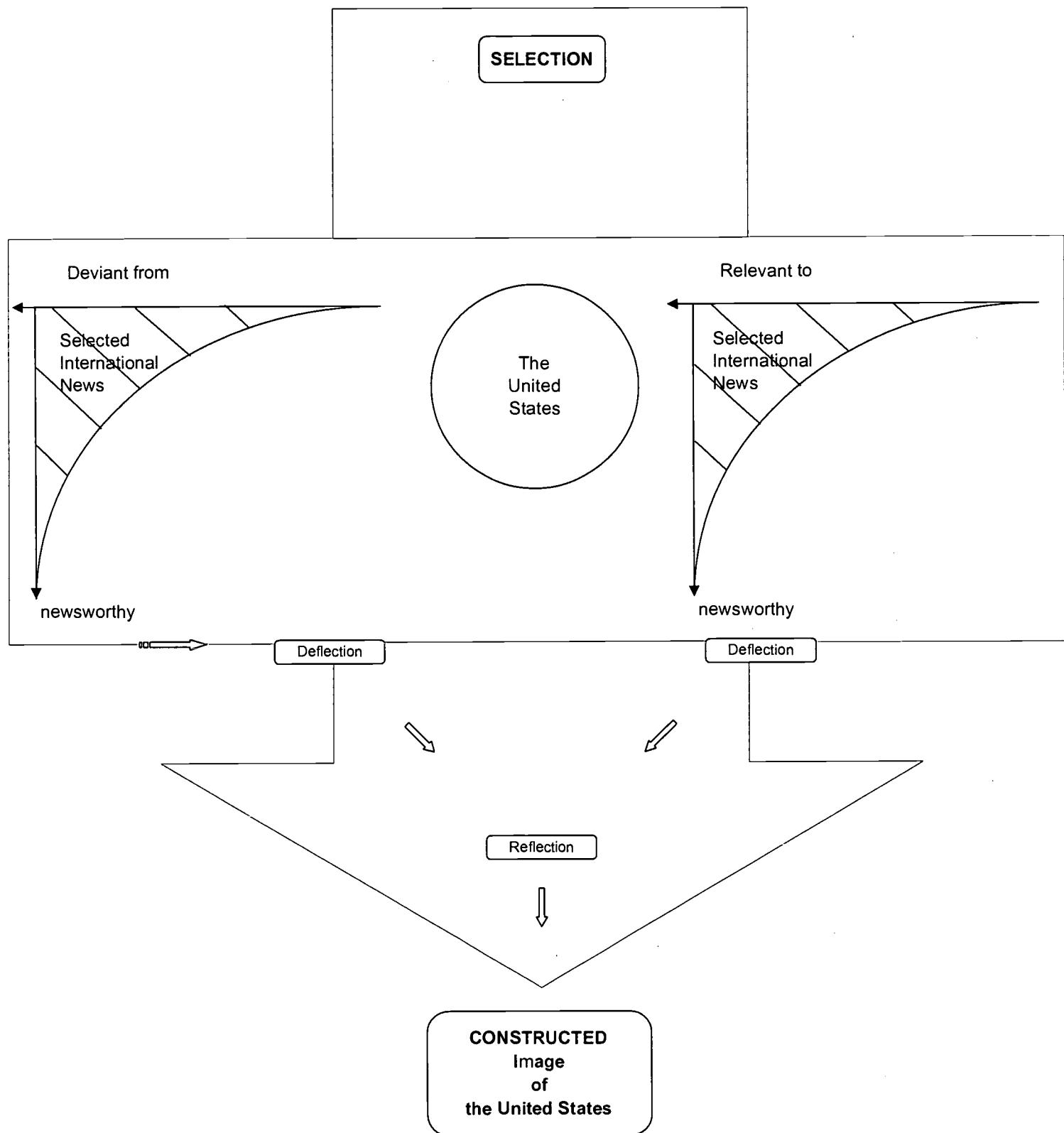


FIGURE 1 A Model of U.S. International News Selection

According to the model (p. 22) proposed, the selection of international news by the U.S. news media is considered in the flow toward the constructed image of the United States, even though Hjarvard (1995) argued that most studies on international news employed either of the two perspectives on the news process, "the perspective of selection" or "the perspective of construction" (p. 2). Paying attention to the process of selecting international news, the selection is based on how the U.S. news media construct news as a social artifact in order to reflect and reinforce the status quo. As each factor influencing international news flow is closely related to each other, the process of selection is also not entirely different from that of construction; rather, each of the two processes affects the other. Selection requires some criteria and boundaries to draw a line between selected and not-selected items, since the process of selection is conducted to focus on certain aspects of something over others. In other words, selecting international news is constructed to reflect certain aspects of international reality while deflecting the other aspects of the reality. In short, selection cannot be done without construction. In the case of the U.S. new media, a construction builds on the selection.

In sum, this paper reviewed the factors influencing international news flow, which previous studies found, focusing on how the U.S. news media select some international news over others. Through taking a look at all the following factors: population, geographical proximity, economic factor, presence of international news agencies, cultural proximity, deviance, world-system, and the U.S. role, the two patterns, deviance-oriented and relevance-oriented, were identified. These two patterns provide a focus of a constructed aspect on the selection perspective of international news. The international news covered by the U.S. news media is selected either in a deviance-oriented or in a

relevance-oriented way. As a result of it, these two patterns are deflective in order to illustrate the U.S. values, norms, and strengths, while they serve well as reflectors of the United States, with shaping the ways of seeing the United States the way international news is selected.

<sup>1</sup> International news studies have many subfields such as news ideology (hegemony), news medium, media bias, news flow, and news coverage—names are few.

<sup>2</sup> According to Hur (1984), the differences between international news flow and coverage studies are approaches and processes to understand the way international news is covered. International news flow studies pay much attention to the amount and direction of news flow among countries; on the other hand, international news coverage studies generally conduct content analyses to figure out the nature and type of as well as the amount of international news.

<sup>3</sup> In this review, there were no studies related to the model which de Verneil (1977) advocated, except the Wu (2000) study, which criticized the de Verneil's model. According to the study (de Verneil, 1977), (1) model group—those countries that could be seen as being open to the world such as Egypt, Israel, Japan, and United Kingdom; (2) alternative group—those countries whose newspapers could be viewed as domestically oriented, compared with model group such as Australia, Canada, India, Mexico, and West Germany; (3) variant group—those countries that published newspapers with international outlook while their economies were not largely dependent upon imports such as Argentina, Brazil, Thailand, and the United States; (4) divergent group—Kenya, the only country, which published a domestically-oriented newspapers while its economy was internationally pendent (pp. 313-315).

<sup>4</sup> From the perspective of the global media marketplace, Carveth (1992) argued, thanks to the well-known international popularity of the U.S. media products, the U.S. media companies traditionally tend to see foreign countries as secondary markets to export motion pictures and TV programs. Indeed, the United States had dominated not only international media content production but also consumer electronics until the 1970s. As a result of the domination in these two industries, the United States had a strong position in the world media markets technologically. However, Carveth pointed out that the U.S. companies in these industries missed an opportunity to make synergistic economic relations and that they lacked their compositeness; therefore, they allowed European countries and Japan to take advantage in consumer electronic industry.

<sup>5</sup> With regard to cultural proximity, Zaharopoulos (1990) examined how the 1988 U.S. presidential campaign was covered by the Greek Press. The study showed that democrat Michael Dukakis, a Greek-American, was given more space with more favorable coverage, than was Republican George Bush. The obvious newsworthiness to the Greek of the Dukakis candidacy played a role in the selection of news elements over which the local gatekeepers had control.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Cho and Lacy (2000) examined the Japanese local daily newspapers in terms of a crisis-oriented approach that is nature of Western news media. This study was based on the previous findings that the U.S. newspapers emphasized disaster and conflict international news, and that the emphasis and the amount of international news run in the paper were associated with organizational variables such as the degree of dependence or wire services and circulation size of the newspapers. Cho and Lacy conducted a content analysis to examine whether these same conclusions could be drawn in the Japanese local daily newspapers. Their findings indicated that there was no connection between circulation and international news coverage in Japanese local daily newspapers; however, they found that the Japanese newspapers' dependence upon wire services for international copy was associated with a higher percentage of international conflict and disaster news coverage like the U.S. news media.

<sup>7</sup> Some scholars attempted to grasp international news flow within the context of international communication. International communication studies consist of the following areas: world media systems; comparative media systems; mass media and development; international political communication; mass media and channel studies; and foreign correspondence studies (Hur, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> Stevenson (1992) argued that international communication was considered under the dominance of Anglo-Americans through language, news, pop culture, and technology.

<sup>9</sup> Masmoudi (1979) provided a different perspective to consider international communication. The study characterized information in the modern world as a fundamental imbalance that came from political, legal, technological, and financial spheres, while pointing out an importance of information in the modern world. An inequality in information resources helped not only create a boundary between developed and developing countries, but also influence in the economic, social, and cultural aspects of international communication.

<sup>10</sup> This term is being used in the manner of Kenneth Burke. Burke (1966) believed that “[E]ven if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality” (p. 45).

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**POST-COMMUNIST BROADCAST MEDIA:  
A CASE STUDY OF ESTONIA'S 1994 BROADCAST LAW**

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**RUNNING HEAD: POST-COMMUNIST BROADCAST MEDIA**

## **POST-COMMUNIST BROADCAST MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF ESTONIA'S 1994 BROADCAST LAW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism in Eastern Europe initiated a third wave of democratization. (Huntington, 1996, p 4) These post-Soviet societies found themselves in an awkward position caught between the old state-centered totalitarian system and democracy and its rules, between the old command economy and a competitive market economy. (Frentzel-Zagorska, 1993, p 177). As these countries made this transformation, they democratized their institutions and liberalized their economies. Russell J. Dalton (1996) noted that "for the first time we are witnessing a transition from communism to democracy, and the nature and destination of this transition is unclear (p 1)." These post-communist countries faced many challenges as they politically and economically transformed their institutions and societies. Among the challenges confronting these countries was the development and enactment of legislation that would create independent democratic broadcast systems. This study utilized a case study approach to examine the development and enactment of broadcast legislation in a post-communist country, Estonia.

After gaining its independence in 1991, Estonia had no electronic media legislation to guide its Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications in the licensing of radio and television stations. The existing state-run broadcasting structure was a relic inherited from the Soviet Union. In 1994, the Estonian Riigikogu (Parliament) enacted a broadcast law that addressed such issues as the licensing, ownership, and programming of private radio and television stations and the operations of its public broadcasting stations. This law combined with the 1991 constitution affected the nature of the state-broadcast media relationship in Estonia and its democratic character. Issues and questions arose during the legislative process and, later, after the broadcast law was enacted. For example: What was the new role for state broadcast media? What were the prospects for the development of privately owned and operated broadcast media? What was the relationship between state and private broadcast media?

For this study, the most important question and focus concerned the development of Estonia's broadcast law? What were the challenges and outcome of the development of Estonia's broadcast legislation in terms of public broadcasting, private broadcasting, and democratization?

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A country's mass media system mirrors the political, social, economic, and geographic conditions of that nation, revealing the character and nature of that society (Head, 1985). Research approaches in studying mass media systems include historical, descriptive, comparative, and critical perspectives. This study utilized historical and policy analysis research approaches in examining the development and enactment of Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law.

Historical research of mass media systems examines the historical context or development of a particular mass media system. Studies include areas such as the development of a specific medium in a mass media system, the evolution of a particular mass media entity, and a review of a particular historical period for a mass media system. Descriptive research contributes information on various factors and attributes of a mass media system. Further, descriptive policy analysis involved a historical examination of past policies or an evaluation of new policies as they were implemented.

### Post-Communist Mass Media Transformations

Studies concerning the political and economic changes of mass media systems in post-communist Eastern Europe and the newly independent countries the demise of the Soviet Union involved various aspects of the transition itself, and the role of the mass media in these transformations. The few studies done in the last decade included: snapshot reports of the mass media in transition, the lack of changes in some mass media systems, the aspects of changes occurring in the mass media systems, the barriers and limitations to changes in the mass media, the processes of change in a mass media system, the mass media's role in political development, the descriptions of mass media in post-Communist countries and the development of a transitional press concept to supplement the Four Theories of the Press.

Hester, Reybold, and Conger (1992) edited a series of articles that provided sketches of various media at the onset of democratization in 1991. A year later Hester and Reybold (1993) provided further snapshots of journalistic and mass media activities and the challenges in Eastern and Central Europe during democratization. In his examination of Belarussian mass media, Oleg Manaev (1993) noted that despite democratization there had been no change in the mass media's political and economic status. The mass media still remained dependent on government authorities

based on the principle of social management. Changes in the mass media systems of post-Communist countries were examined in an analysis of East Germany's media system as unification and democratization occurred (Robinson , 1995). A study of Romania noted that improvements and dramatic increases in broadcast competition and freedom in that country were attributed to the "development of alternative networks, access to Western-style programming and production techniques, the rise of private, independent broadcasters, and the international exchange of broadcast content (Mollison, 1998, p 127)." Barriers and limitations to changes in mass media systems were observed in studies of the Ukraine, Hungary and Germany (Pryliuk, 1993). Observations concerning media and change in Hungary concluded that creating a democracy and its institutions was difficult when a people's history and socialization did not include the expectations and assumptions needed to accomplish it ( Kováts & Whiting, 1995).

Peter Humphreys (1994) examined the development of German media policies since 1945. Part of this study included the imposition, upon unification, of West Germany's pluralistic media policies and system on East Germany. While studying the process of change in a mass media system, Kleinwaechter (1997) studied the transition of broadcasting in Eastern and Central Europe. The role of the mass media in political and economic development were examined in Romania, and in a study of the comparison of Brazilian and Eastern European mass media (Gross, 1996). Gross (1993) also researched the role and effect of the mass media in forming public opinion in Romania, noting that the media's efforts produced mixed results.

Mass media's role in the process of democratic transition was compared in Brazil and Eastern Europe (Busato, 1993, Gross, 1996). Janice Overlock (1996) offered a descriptive overview of media developments in newly independent post-Communist countries, providing a brief description of the number and programming of radio and television stations and the status of developing broadcast laws. John Downing (1996), using Poland, Hungary, and Russia as his focus, examined the multiple roles of the media in the political, economic, and cultural transitions taking place in these countries between 1990 - 1995. In studying the rapid changes occurring in Bulgaria's media structure, it was discovered that the prescriptive concepts of authoritarian, libertarian, Communist, social responsibility and democratic socialist coexist. Media developments in post-communist Bulgaria were examined leading to the development of a descriptive transitional press concept (Ognianova, 1996).

The transformations in Eastern Europe and in the independent post-Soviet nations furnished new opportunities to study the democratization of mass media systems (Bruck, 1993). They have had to redesign themselves politically and economically. As one of the new post-Soviet nations, Estonia's transformation was significantly different from that of the Eastern European nations, because its political and economic structures were highly integrated with the Soviet Union. Upon gaining its independence in 1991, Estonia embarked on an aggressive campaign of political and economic changes. One major focus of these changes concerned its broadcasting system.

### Estonia

Estonia is situated on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, bounded in the north by the Gulf of Finland. It shares borders in the east with Russia and in the south with Latvia. The northern most of the three Baltic Republics, Estonia is larger than Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, or Switzerland. The country covers 45,226 square kilometers with another 2,315 sq. km in dispute with Russia (Fjuk & Kaevats, 1994). By comparison, its is approximately the size of New Hampshire and Vermont combined (Cannon & Hough, 1995).

In August 1991, upon gaining its independence from the Soviet Union, Estonia immediately began changing the political and economic system imposed upon them by the Soviets. Left with the remnants of a fifty-year communist political system and centrally planned economy, Estonia proceeded to restore its democracy with a new democratic constitution and institutions.

The reform and development of independent broadcast media began with protections provided for by the new constitution, ratified in June 1992, guaranteeing freedom of the speech and of the press. Section 45 secured the right to freely circulate ideas, opinions, persuasions and other information by word, print, picture and other means. It stated that there was no censorship. In addition, Section 41 of the constitution provided rights for everyone to have their own opinions and persuasions. With these protections, the development of a democratic broadcasting system in Estonia began.

The initial lack of legislation guiding the licensing and regulation of both public and private broadcasting presented a major challenge for the development of Estonia's broadcast system. Estonia's state-owned broadcasting system had served as a tool of the state and communist party. Now as Estonia's 'public' broadcasting system, financed and operated by the state, its role and

operations were now unclear without legislation to give direction. Also, the lack of legislation from August 1991 to June 1994 was problematic in the development of private broadcasting in Estonia. The process, procedures, and criteria for getting a license were ambiguous, often resulting in conflict. Legislation was needed to specify the criteria of how licenses were to be assigned and to regulate broadcasters. It would not be until the June 1994 Broadcast Law that legislation was enacted regulating broadcasting in Estonia.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Estonia gained its independence in August 1991. Like many of the newly independent post-Soviet countries and post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe, Estonia restructured and changed its political and economic systems. Unlike post-Communist Eastern Europe, Estonia had the burden of shedding the shackles of fifty years of Soviet occupation and control. An important part of this transformation was the democratization and privatization of its broadcast media system. A major step towards this transformation was the development and enactment of legislation establishing regulations for a democratic broadcast system.

The following research questions guided this investigation:

- What issues dominated the development of a democratic broadcast law for Estonia?
- What was the final outcome of the enactment of Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law?
- What were the consequences of the enactment of Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law?

The answers to the research questions provided insight into the challenges that confronted Estonia, and generally other post-communist and post-Soviet countries, in drafting and enacting legislation that would regulate its broadcast system in a market oriented democracy. In addition, they disclosed the issues and challenges that still remained for the broadcast media in this new democratic country.

### METHODOLOGY

This research employed a case study approach, which study the development and enactment of Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law. A case study approach was adopted since it focuses on understanding the dynamics existing within a single environment or setting (Arneson, 1993). Although the case study relied on the judgment of the researcher, it offered the advantage of triangulating sources of information, including personal interviews, newspaper reports, documents,

and independent reports (Feagin et al, 1991). Estonia was chosen as a case study since it was recognized as the most advanced of the newly democratic states of the post-Soviet societies (Barnard, 1997).

One method used to study Estonia's broadcast system was historical. Startt and Sloan (1989) recognized that "one purpose of good history is to provide understanding of change (p 20)." Historical research furnished a "contextual foundation for identifying and understanding (Arneson, 1993, p 163)" issues and problems of the subject under study. Primary sources were used such as documents in conjunction with interviews to provide a historical view of the problem or experience of a situation. Close examination and comparison of information gathered through primary sources contributed to establishing credibility and authenticity (Smith, 1981).

This research involved policy considerations in studying the political and economic reform of Estonia's broadcast system. Patton and Sawicki (1993) observed that descriptive policy analysis involved a historical examination of past policies or an evaluation of new policies as they were implemented. Portney (1986) provided two approaches relevant to this study: one involved research into the policy making process and the other, similar to Patton and Sawicki's (1993) descriptive analysis, looked at the causes and consequences of public policies. Studying the policy making process acknowledged that public policy was not a "product of government action but as a political process (Portney, 1986, p 4)." Understanding this process revealed institutional participants' positions, values, and resources, explaining how decisions were made. Research on the causes and consequences of public policies focused on the intended or unintended impact of government non-decisions or decisions. The focus was on the results of public policy (Portney, 1986).

There were three sources from which to study a nation's media system and policy. One involved the "official statements about the goals and means embodied by the legislation, regulations, reports, of commissions and committees, parliamentary speeches, regulatory decisions, and the like (McNulty & Martin, 1983, p 95)." Another set of sources consisted of interviews with relevant actors in the policymaking process and media system.

Purposeful sampling methods were used to select informants for in-depth interviews. For this study a snowball sampling method was used to recruit informants for interview. According to Babbie (1992), when a purposive sampling method was used, such as snowball, the researcher

selected a sample of individuals that he "believe(s) will yield the most comprehensive understanding of [the] subject of study (p 292)." Some participants were interviewed for information they possessed, while others were interviewed for whom they knew. The latter respondents did not have information for study, but directed the researcher to someone who did. The researcher started the snowball by approaching individuals in Estonia's broadcast media. Then respective government ministries of culture and telecommunications were selected for interview for their knowledge of the development of Estonia's broadcast system and laws. Each informant was asked to suggest others to be interviewed. The Estonians interviewed for this research can be found in the appendix.

Research concerning Estonia's broadcast media policy necessarily included accounting for all groups and interests that sought to influence its development. This included the following actors: government officials, members of parliament, former and current public and private broadcast owners and operators, broadcast interest groups or associations, and other interested parties such as journalists and consultants. The nature of the issues raised by the media policy influenced the "range of actors, the extent, depth, and effectiveness of their involvement, and their various motivations and behavior (Humphreys, 1994, p 6-7)."

Estonia's new constitution, government laws, and private documents were studied and compared for information and their contribution to the development of this new democratic broadcast system. Information also was gathered from the Baltic English language newspaper, *The Baltic Independent*, now *The Baltic Times*, reviewing issues for the five year period under examination. Estonian language newspapers *Eesti Päevaleht* and *Postimees* were also studied for relevant articles with the help of an Estonian. In addition, information provided by *Baltic Media Facts* and reports by the European Community contributed to the findings found in this dissertation.

The researcher spent approximately five weeks in Estonia interviewing various respondents, including government officials, parliament members, public broadcasters, private broadcasters, and consultants. Interviews provided the opportunity to gain information from different actors concerning Estonia's broadcast media policy and system.

### Treatment of the Data

Qualitative methods generated a tremendous amount of data. The information provided depth and detail on the research topic through direct quotation and description of situations, events,

and interactions. Identification and organization of relevant data often was difficult yet important for successful analysis. Interpretation followed as the researcher studied the data for ideas, causes, and relationships. Then the analysis concluded with the researcher establishing trust in the interpretations by reviewing the data for alternative explanations (Patton, 1987). Analysis of the data collected in Estonia was enhanced by the constant review that occurred during the comparing and contrasting of information. Often additional ideas and information emerged that enriched the findings.

## RESULTS

### **Broadcast Law: Draft and Enactment**

From 1991 until June 1994, Estonia lacked a law guiding the regulation of the broadcast media. Broadcast licensing and regulation was carried out by government acts through the Ministry of Culture and Education. The development of Estonia's broadcast system, especially the private sector, was hindered since no clear policy existed to provide for its establishment. Issues arose as a result, and tensions increased between state and private broadcasters as political and economic reforms in Estonia proceeded. The following sections examine the development and results concerning Estonia's 1994 Broadcast Law.

### **The Working Group**

In 1993, the Minister of Culture and Education appointed a working group to develop and draft a broadcast law for The Riigikogu to consider and enact. Various interests and their representatives were represented in this working group. These included private broadcasters such as Rein Lang of AS Trio, and ETV General Manager Victor Seilas; Vice-President of RTV Andres Jõesaar, public broadcasters such as Eesti Raadio Managing Director Herkki Haldre and Eesti Televisioon Managing Director Hagi Shein, representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Education such as Paul-Eerik Rummo and Minister of Culture and Education deputy Marju Laur, a representative from the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, representatives from the film makers union, and members of The Riigikogu's Committee for Cultural Affairs. (P. Rummo, personal communication, December 1996; M. Laur, personal communication, November 1996).

Work began on a draft of the law in 1993. Expectations were that a law would be given to The Riigikogu and enacted by the end of the year (Barne, 1993). However, disagreements among

the working committee delayed its consideration until the spring of 1994 (H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996). Many interviewed for this research observed that Rein Lang of AS Trio, owner of Raadio KUKU, was one of the primary architects for the draft that the government would eventually submit to The Riigikogu. Andres Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996) noted that Lang was responsible for about 90% of the draft.

Another version written by Enn Kopli, lawyer for ETV, was supposedly geared toward "more public service interests (Hunt, 1994)." However, this version was accidentally deleted by the author from his computer. Thus, Lang's draft, the only one available, was taken under discussion (Hunt, personal communication, December 1996). European Broadcast Union (EBU) Director for Legal Affairs, Werner Rumphorst, said that he was perplexed that an owner of a commercial radio station was one of the drafters of the broadcast law. He felt that "laws cannot be written by people who have a direct interest in the legislative effort (Tammerk, 1994, p 8.)"

Work on a draft continued through 1993 and into early 1994. The draft that eventually was written went through the various ministries of government for review, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Ministry of Culture (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996). It was not presented and acted upon by the Riigikogu until Spring 1994, with a law being passed on May 19, 1994 ("The Estonian Parliamentary Elections," 1995) and enacted on June 15, 1994 ("Broadcasting Law in Force on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1994). The following section reviews the major issues dealt with by the working group.

### **Issues Addressed by the Working Group**

Several issues were to be dealt with in the new broadcast law. The primary issues included advertising on public broadcasting, the role of public broadcasting, the amount of foreign programming, foreign ownership of Estonian broadcast stations and control of Estonian state-owned transmission systems (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996; M. Laur, personal communication, November 1996; A. Jõesaar, personal communication, December 1996; H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996). Tõnis Palts (personal communication, December 1996), CEO and Chairman of LEVICOM, also observed that fundamentally, the new law needed to provide a process, procedure, and criteria for the application and granting of licenses for radio and

television stations. This was easily apparent in the competition for television licenses granted in 1993 (Källu, 1993).

The respondents interviewed for this study agreed that these were the primary points addressed by the working group. For most of the points the working group members were close in their positions. They agreed primarily with regulation concerning local content and foreign ownership. The primary issue of major disagreement was advertising on public broadcasting. Private and public broadcasters were divided over this issue (M. Laur, personal communication, November 1996). The following section reviews the primary issues addressed by the draft.

### **Commercials on Public Broadcasting**

Lang (personal communication, November 1996) noted that private broadcasters wanted advertising banned from public radio and public television. They felt that public stations unfairly competed with private radio and private television since they were subsidized by the state. "Commercial radio stations claimed that R2 [public radio] was using state subsidies to offer lower advertising rates (Källu, 1993, p B2)." Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996), Lang (personal communication, November 1996), and Laur (personal communication, November 1996) noted that the draft from the working group called for no commercials on state radio and television.

### **The Role of Public Broadcasting**

In conjunction with the issue of advertising, determining the role and organization of public radio and public television were important elements in the development of a broadcast law. The draft and eventual law officially changed and established state broadcasting as public radio and public television. However, the approach to organizing public radio and public television differed between the private and public representatives in the working group. Most, except the public broadcasters in the group, were for combining the public radio and public television into one organization, which was written into the draft (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996).

In addition, a Broadcast Council would be established to oversee the operations of public broadcasting. The Riigikogu would appoint people to serve on the Broadcast Council. The council would appoint managing directors for both public radio and public television. The council's purpose was to isolate public broadcasting from pressure and interference from the government and

The Riigikogu. However, the draft called for the Estonian government to continue direct subsidization to public broadcasting, rather than through the Broadcast Council. Furthermore, the role of public broadcasting in the draft, and the law that was eventually enacted, was broad and open to interpretation. (H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996).

### **Local Content and Imported Programming Provisions**

Fearing domination by imported programming, the draft legislation established minimum requirements for the broadcast of domestic programming. According to Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996), the draft provisions were different for public and private broadcasters. In the draft, public broadcasters were required to have at least 51% local content programming, while the requirement was lower for private broadcasters, just 30%. Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) noted that these provisions were advocated by the Ministry of Culture and Education, filmmakers, authors and poets. They felt that this would support and encourage more local programming production.

### **Foreign Ownership Provisions**

The domination of Estonian broadcasting by foreign capital was a major concern. The draft that eventually made it to The Riigikogu limited foreign ownership to 49% of an Estonian broadcast station. The working group was in general agreement concerning this provision (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996).

### **Transmitter Ownership and Control**

Another element in the discussion was to transfer control of the transmitters to public broadcasting's Eesti Raadio and Eesti Televisioon. The transmitter system had been under control of government owned Eesti Telekom since independence. The draft sent to The Riigikogu transferred control to public radio and public television (H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996).

### **Changes to The Draft and the Law That Was Enacted**

The working draft the government eventually sent to The Riigikogu was considered pro-private broadcasting. Provisions in the draft prohibited commercials in public broadcasting stations, a major issue between public and private broadcasters. In addition, public radio and public television were combined into one organization in the draft law. For private broadcasters, the draft served to support the development and growth of private broadcasting in Estonia.

The 1994 Broadcast Law passed by The Riigikogu was significantly different from the draft the working group had prepared. Laur (personal communication, November 1996) noted that private broadcasters lost the battle in The Riigikogu. What occurred was a strong lobbying effort that promoted changes favoring public broadcasting. Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) believed that The Riigikogu did not understand the impact of the changes that were being made. In addition, The Riigikogu acted on the legislation late into the night, a time when most legislators' primary concern was getting home. Laur (personal communication, November 1996) stated that

It was weird because if the law came out from the government before going to parliament [and] it had all the proposals the commission made . . . it means that [Prime Minister] Mart Laar favored those proposals as head of the government . . . it was changed in the parliament even though his party was in power. There was not strong party discipline . . . this is because the democracy at that time was very young and there was no real political experience and no political behavior in the sense of Western democracies.

Laur (personal communication, November 1996), Lang (personal communication, November 1996), Haldre (personal communication, December 1996), and Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996) noted that public broadcasters were stronger than the private broadcasters and had better influence in The Riigikogu. Holmberg (personal communication, April 1998) observed that Eesti Televisioon had strongly lobbied and influenced The Riigikogu. In addition, he noted that EBU Director for Legal Affairs, Werner Rumphorst, had lobbied on behalf of public broadcasters. Mr. Rumphorst had earlier infuriated private broadcasters by indicating that

the country should first set-up a strong public service operation. Commercial stations should be encouraged only after they have attracted enough advertising revenue to live on. He said overdue influence of the commercial stations would drive out Estonian-language programming, which would not be produced as much by commercial operators intent on drawing the biggest audience at minimal cost (Tammerk, 1994, p 8).

While it was acknowledged that public broadcasters had greater influence with The Riigikogu, others indicated a lack of party discipline in The Riigikogu as another reason for changes in the draft. Both Rummo (personal communication, December 1996) and Veidemann (personal communication, December 1996) also observed that since Estonia was a new democracy, The Riigikogu lacked party loyalty.

In addition, although Prime Minister Mart Laar and his Fatherland Party had aggressively sought to transform and liberalize the economy through privatization, things had changed by the time the draft of the Broadcast Law had come up for debate. During the year since the group had worked on the draft, 1993 to 1994, the economy was in poor shape, the government's budget was limited, and the effects of the reforms had been economically hard on the Estonian population (R. Veidemann, personal communication, December 1996). The effects of these items had been hard on Estonia and its people. The Riigikogu's mood had changed and their zeal at privatizing state enterprises had waned (H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996).

The ensuing section highlights and reviews issues covered by the 1994 Broadcast Law and how they were either similar or different from the draft submitted to The Riigikogu.

### Advertising

Section 35 of the 1994 Broadcast Law enacted provided that the income for public stations Eesti Raadio and Eesti Televisioon would be composed of 1) taxes determined by law; 2) amounts directly allocated from the state budget; 3) advertising, the procedures, prices, usage and volume of which shall be decided by the Broadcasting Council, whereby the volume of advertising must not exceed 5 per cent of the broadcast volume of the daily program on the one channel for Eesti Televisioon and on the two channels for Eesti Raadio, of which one is in a foreign language; and 4) amounts from foundations, sponsorship, rental from transmitter networks and other sources (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994). In addition to tax subsidies, point three above permitted advertising on public radio and public television to supplement their budgets.

The issue of advertising on private radio and private television stations was covered in Chapter 3 of the 1994 Broadcast Law. Besides covering issues such as honesty, children's advertising, and identification, Section 17 of the Broadcast Law limited advertising volume for private broadcasters. It stipulated that

The volume of advertising in a program must not exceed 20 per cent of the daily volume of the program, whereas: 1) the volume of advertising in a television program - 15 percent of the daily volume of the program, and 12 minutes in any one hour segment of the program; [and] 2) the volume of advertising in a television program in the form of direct offer of sale, purchase of goods, or rental of services - one hour per day (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

Those interviewed indicated that the most significant change in the draft made by The Riigikogu permitted commercials on public broadcasting stations. Rummo (personal communication, December 1996) observed that

The draft was a little bit balanced, especially if we speak about balance between public and private broadcasting activities; as well as about budgetary [financing] process for financing public broadcasting. But [the draft was] made very different by amendments by parliament. . . Main difference is there . . . was no advertising in the public channels. . . But that is not the case now.

### **Public Broadcasting's Role in Estonia**

The 1994 Broadcast Law addressed the issue of the role of public broadcasting in Estonia. The Broadcast Law's Chapter 5 section 25 provisions on Public Broadcasting Organizations specified that

The tasks of Eesti Raadio and Eesti Television shall be:

- 1) fostering, promoting Estonian national culture, and the recording, preservation and introduction of its best achievements;
- 2) being intermediary for the best achievements in world culture;
- 3) creation and transmission of varied and balanced programs, on a high journalistic, artistic and technical level;
- 4) satisfaction of the information need of all national groups, including minorities;
- 5) creation of mainly information, cultural educational, training and entertainment broadcasts (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

When The Riigikogu acted on the issue of public broadcasting, Laur (personal communication, November 1996) observed "that public radio and TV were separated into two separate companies, not as proposed by the commission [working group]; to put them together into one holding company." She believed that Veidemann convinced The Riigikogu that if public radio and public television were combined into one organization, they would not be able to be a member of the EBU anymore. This information was incorrect. According to Laur, the holding company that would have been formed could have maintained EBU membership.

Although separated, both public radio and public television would be overseen by an independent body, the Broadcast Council. Section 31 of the 1994 Broadcast Law provided that the Broadcast Council be composed of nine members who would meet at least once every two months. Members of the Broadcast Council were to be appointed by The Riigikogu. Its primary duties included the appointment of the managing directors for public radio and public television, confirming of public radio's and public television's budgets, and confirming the principle direction of public broadcasters (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

### **Ownership Provisions**

The issue of ownership in the 1994 Broadcast Law was covered in Chapter 4, Ownership Rights to Broadcasting Technical Resources and to Broadcasts and Programs. Two sections in particular address the issue of ownership. Section 21 provisions for private ownership of Estonian radio and television stations stated

Broadcasting transmitters may be owned by, and have direct proprietorship by:

- 1) Legal entities registered in Estonia where over half of the votes determined according to shares or stocks belong to Estonian citizens [and]
  - 2) Estonian citizens who are permanently resident in Estonia
- (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

Later Section 39, concerning application for broadcast licenses, provided that the application for a license must include a document showing the distribution of votes determined by shares or stocks, which proves the accordance of the entity with the requirements determined in §22, Point 1 of the present law (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

According to these sections an owner of a private radio or private television station must be either an Estonian citizen or an Estonian majority-owned company. The idea of limiting foreign ownership was pushed primarily by private broadcasters. They feared that foreign broadcast companies with large amounts of capital would overrun Estonian broadcasters who lacked the financial resources to compete, forcing them out of business (Källu, 1993).

The 1994 Broadcast Law also provided provisions prohibiting cross-ownership of the media in the same geographic area. In Section 41, concerning the issuing of broadcast licenses, point 4 item 8 provided that

- (4) The Ministry of Culture and Education shall refuse to issue a broadcasting license if:
- 8) the proprietor of the television or radio station or the responsible publisher of the daily or weekly newspaper would simultaneously become the responsible publisher of television, radio and daily or weekly newspapers on territory planned for the broadcast operations or on part of Estonian territory (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994).

According to Haldre (personal communication, December 1996), if someone owned two out of three types of media in a market, they could not own the third. An example would be if someone owned a newspaper and a radio station, then they could not own a television station.

### Programming Content Provisions

The primary provision concerning domestic programming content in the 1994 Broadcast Law concerned public broadcasting. Under Section 25, the tasks of Eesti Raadio and Eesti Televisioon, point 2 item 2 stipulated that "Eesti Raadio and Eesti Television shall guarantee: 2) proportion of at least 51 per cent local product in their programs (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994)."

Programming content provisions for private broadcasting were minimal and vague, despite what respondents had noted earlier when discussing the draft. For example, several broadcasting executives believed that the enacted Broadcast Law required private radio and television to have a minimum of 20% local programming content.. However, the primary reference to local programming content found in Section 38 had no specified local programming requirement. The only programming requirement for private broadcasters was found in section 4, requiring that 5% of a program day must be news broadcasts (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994). It appears that some broadcasters confused the temporary rules created by the Riigikogu's Culture Commission, during the interim before a law was enacted, with the actual Broadcast Law.

The 1994 Broadcast Law focused more on local content provisions for public rather than private broadcasters. However, the law apparently left some discretion to the Ministry of Culture and Education to specify local content requirements when issuing individual licenses. In addition, it appeared that the amount of local programming planned could be used in the licensing process when two or more applicants were vying for the same broadcast license. Section 39 point 1 provided that the "planned program description and data . . . may be necessary to decide the issuing of the license (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994)."

Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996) noted that the intent of the content provision was to preserve Estonian production and filmmaking. The local content provision was pushed by the Ministry of Culture and Education and filmmakers. Public broadcasters used the content requirement to justify further the need for advertising on public stations. They said that additional money from advertising was necessary to help pay for local productions, especially while the economy was poor and still developing (M. Laur, personal communication, November 1996).

Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) noted that the local content provision could be broadly defined. Weather, news, traffic reports, and even Estonian language subtitled or dubbed foreign programs could be counted as local content. Since the 1989 Language Law required any foreign program to be either dubbed or subtitled in Estonian, then a broad definition of the content regulations would easily meet the requirements. Hunt (personal communication, December 1996) suggested that the broad definition of the content provision had been done purposely, noting that it was expensive to produce actual local programming for television.

### Transmitters

The 1994 Broadcast Law transferred control of the government owned transmitter system to public radio and public television. The law also provided in Section 22 for the private ownership of private stations' broadcast transmitters by permanent Estonian citizens or Estonian-registered legal entities with a majority of the voting stock owned by Estonians. The draft version of the Broadcast Law called for the transfer of the government transmitting system to the control of public radio and public television. Initially, Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) had pushed for the privatization of the transmitting system during early discussions on the draft. However, by Spring 1994 the mood and goals of The Riigikogu had changed. Similar to the situation with public radio Raadio2, the revenues from the transmitters produced badly needed financial resources. Lang (personal communication, November 1996) noted that the law enacted by The Riigikogu did transfer control of the transmitting system to public radio and public television. Private television broadcasters rented the government transmitters and thus would no be dependent on the public broadcasters for their transmission system. Private radio broadcasters owned their own transmitting facilities.

### **Post Broadcast Law Developments: 1995-1996**

By the time the Broadcast Law had been enacted, Estonia was confronting the challenges in reforming and developing its broadcast system. The 1994 Broadcast Law gave government ministries guidelines in granting licenses and in regulating broadcasters. However, the Broadcast Law also was ambiguous in some of the issues it covered and exacerbated the acrimonious relationship between public and private broadcasters. Since the 1994 Broadcast Law's enactment, the issue of commercialized public broadcasting was the primary focal point in the development of Estonia's broadcast system. Inherent in this issue was debate concerning the role of public broadcasting in Estonia. Other issues such as ownership and the transmitters were of lesser concern.

Through 1996, the acrimonious relationship between private and public broadcasters continued in Estonia. The advertising provisions, meant to supplement public broadcasting's revenues, angered private broadcasters. Loit (personal communication, November 1996) noted that while the idea was to get additional dollars to support cultural and educational programming for public broadcasting, they instead put it into entertainment and activities aimed at making them attractive commercially. He felt the programming was unbalanced towards entertainment, yet it was considered public service. Both Loit and Palts (personal communication, December 1996) believed that this unfairly competed with private broadcasters since public broadcasting was subsidized by the state.<sup>1</sup>

Ex-managing director of Eesti Raadio, Herkki Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) also noted that the law enacted left public broadcasting's role in Estonia ambiguous, especially since it permitted advertising on the public stations. He observed that as a result, public television looked like a typical commercial station that did some public service noting, "you can't tell the difference." Private television station Kanal Kaks, according to Haldre, did more to serve the Russian minorities than public television. He believed that public broadcasting should act more as an educator. Kanal Kak's Ilmar Taska (personal communication, December 1996) noted that public television was more concerned with ratings than public service, citing the game shows and entertainment programming as an example.

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<sup>1</sup> As of January 1998, Eesti Televisioon (ETV) stopped showing commercials. Its new managing director, Toomas Lepp, had signed an agreement with the three private stations agreeing to cease soliciting commercial advertising (Sinisula, personal communication, 1998).

According to Laur (personal communication, November 1996)

It is very difficult. So it's [an] like endless debate, because one issue is money and the other issue is programming. They are very closely tied together . . . the financing has always been a problem . . . it's very easy for the state broadcasters to say that we cannot produce this kind of programming [local content] which is exactly in the law because we don't have enough resources.

She added that The Riigikogu, at the time of the Broadcast Law's enactment, did not know and understand what public broadcasting's role should be, and it still doesn't have an idea. According to Laur, "there are some points about the mission of public radio and TV in the law, but they are too broad. So you can do everything and say we are following those principles ." She stated that "they are all the time debating . . . everyone in Parliament [understands] there is a problem. . . nobody has the courage to decide" on what the programming should be on public broadcasting.

Managing director of Eesti Televisioon, Hagi Shein (personal communication, December 1996), also observed that political parties in Estonia did not have a clear position on public broadcasting. Palts (personal communication, December 1996) believed there was a need to state a clear mission for public broadcasting in Estonia, for it did not have one. According to Rummo (personal communication, December 1996), "almost all political sides are skeptical about the ambitions" of public television as well as public radio. There was a feeling that the large amount of money appropriated from the state budget to public broadcasting was not good, considering that private broadcasters had proved to be quite good and quite strong.

Rummo (personal communication, December 1996) noted that the Broadcast Council was charged with supervising public broadcasting, but under current law, was limited in its involvement to day-to-day activities. However, the council had strong ambitions for public broadcasting and desired to have more say about program policy. For example, Rummo observed that public broadcasting should "largely have more cultural programming and to give possibilities to the local producers." He went on to state that the focus for public broadcasting should have been on

More tradition and aims. The background is that today . . . our thinking is that almost every Estonian family would have satellite and cable. And [with] such a background its completely absurd to have public programs of entertainment and so on in Estonian TV and Estonian radio, because they have it without Estonian channels. And so Estonian channels have to concentrate more on local life and local culture [and] it should be more educational (P. Rummo, personal communication, December 1996).

Rummo (personal communication, December 1996) believed that the abundance of low quality entertainment programming on public television was there to have ratings for advertising dollars and thus, increase income. However, he felt that since Estonia already had private television with its commercial entertainment fare, there was no need for government subsidized and advertising supported entertainment programs on public television and public radio. Various ideas were being promoted as alternatives to financing public broadcasting. Spoken of often was that offered by the managing director of Eesti Raadio, Peeter Sookruus (personal communication, December 1996). It involved a fixed state subsidy of 1% of state revenues without advertising. This would have helped to isolate public broadcasters from the government and helped with long-term planning.

When the 1994 Broadcast Law was enacted, Ministry of Culture and Education Peeter Olesk declared that, as part of the implementation of the new law, frequencies and transmitters would be reallocated among Estonia's private television stations. In September 1994, the temporary licenses were substituted with permanent ones but with different frequencies and transmitters. Private television stations ETV and EVTV were furious. The new arrangement meant that private television station Kanal Kaks would cover 60% of the territory and 75% of the population. For EVTV and RTV, which shared the same frequency, this resulted in a signal that covered 60% of the territory and 81% of the population. Under the old arrangement, Kanal Kaks could only be received by 60% of the Estonian population while ETV and RTV enjoyed access to 90% (Tammerk, 1994).

The decree resulted in EVTV and RTV losing the coverage that they once had in Southern Estonia. In addition, *The Baltic Independent* observed that Minister Olesk "incurred the wrath of thousands of viewers who could no longer get their daily fill of the immensely popular soap operas *The Bold and the Beautiful*, *Dirty Face*, *E-Street*, and *Paradise Beach* (Tammerk, 1994, p 7)." Kanal Kaks benefited in gaining coverage in the south where it had none before. Kanal Kaks owner Ilmar Taska stated that "the newly-created conditions of fair competition create equal opportunities for all private channels (Tammerk, 1994, p 7)."

However, believing that the decree violated the new broadcast law, both EVTV and RTV took the minister to court, resulting in a temporary suspension of the new arrangements and restoration of the original allocation of frequencies and transmitters on October 21, 1994. This

initiated what was to become known as the 'TV War.' EVTV owner Viktor Siilars noted that his company experienced major financial losses due to the re-allocation and resulting confusion. The two television companies also made accusations of favoritism, observing that then Prime Minister Mart Laar hosted a popular history series on Kanal Kaks (Tammerk, 1994).

By the time of parliamentary elections in March 1995, the court case had not been resolved. Anger ensued from viewers who could not watch their favorite television programs when the new assignments were made. Accusations of discrimination and political favoritism were made by RTV and EVTV, who pointed out links between Kanal Kaks and then Prime Minister Mart Laar. This was thought to have influenced the March 1995 election results. After the election, Mart Laar stated that "This TV War has cost my party [Fatherland] 5% of the votes ("The Estonian Parliamentary Elections," 1995, p 31)." In that election, the Fatherland party received only 7% of the votes, losing its dominant position in The Riigikogu.

The TV War finally concluded on October 3, 1995 when Ministry of Culture Jaak Allik wrote letters of apology to EVTV and RTV with an offer to rent the highest TV tower in Estonia, the Valgjarve tower, if they would drop the court case and pay the court fees. When the previous Ministry of Culture and Education had made the reassessments in September of 1994, EVTV and RTV had lost the rights to use Valgjarve TV tower, being assigned instead use of lower and less powerful Tartu and Koeru towers. Now EVTV and RTV regained its position through this agreement (E. Kokkota, personal communication, May 1998). Kanal Kaks retained its reassigned transmitters and frequencies.

Another conflict occurred in mid-January 1996 when EVTV and RTV merged to form TV3. TV3 Vice-President Andres Jõesaar (personal communication, December 1996) noted that both companies had experienced major losses in 1995, thus the need to combine resources. The result of the merger was better resources for higher quality programming. The new company had to compete with two other contestants for the license its previous unmerged parts once had. Although TV3 was seen as a favored applicant, the Ministry of Culture's licensing Commission had voted by five to three to grant the license to AS Trio Ltd., owner of Raadio KUKU, but, this vote was not binding on the minister. Instead he granted it to TV 3, noting that "TV 3 as a legal successor of EVTV and RTV has "a certain established audience, a reputation among the viewers and continuity of programming (Oll, 1996, p 2)."

In his opinion, Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) observed that the Minister of Culture could have saved himself some trouble by invoking the Broadcast Law's provision prohibiting cross-ownership of the media. The broadcast law restricted cross-ownership to two out of three media types in the same area (Estonian Broadcast Law, 1994). Raadio KUKU was owned by AS Trio Ltd., whose owners included Hans Luik. Luik was a major player in Estonia's media market. Besides AS Trio, he also owned a number of newspapers. Haldre believed that the cross-ownership rules of the 1994 Broadcast Law would have prevented AS Trio from receiving a television license. However, the Minister of Culture chose to cite other reasons.

During the interviews ownership was not a high concern among respondents. The more pressing issues were the commercialization of public broadcasting and its competition with private broadcasters. The regulations enacted left ways to get around this provision (H. Haldre, personal communication, December 1996). The draft and the final version of the enacted 1994 Broadcast Law limited foreign ownership of broadcast stations in Estonia to 49%, requiring the remaining 51% to be Estonian ownership. However, according to Loit (personal communication, November 1996) and Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) there were examples where the law was circumvented. While stations appeared to follow foreign ownership restrictions, they actually circumvented the law in various ways. Loit observed that a foreign company may own 49% of a station's shares, then can enter into further ownership by buying shares in an Estonian company or companies that owned the other 51% of the station. Another example was cited where a station actually was controlled by a foreign company. While not sure how it was legally done, Loit believed it was accomplished through some sort of formalized agreement or transfer of voting stock.

However, Rummo (personal communication, December 1996) felt that the issue of foreign ownership was only a little bit of politician paranoia. He believed that Estonia was too small a market to be of interest to international media companies. Haldre (personal communication, December 1996) said that the foreign ownership provision really did not work, but that overall it was not a problem. He also noted that Estonia was a small country, making it an unattractive media market for an international broadcast company to consider making a major investment.

The 1994 Broadcast Law had transferred control of the state-owned transmitters to public radio and public television. However, less than a year later the law was amended, transferring control back to Eesti Telekom (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996; Rummo,

personal communication, December 1996; Sookruus, personal communication, December 1996). But Rummo said that even this was not a good situation since Eesti Telekom was owned by the government and acted like a monopoly, charging high prices for transmitter rental to public radio and public television and private television broadcasters. According to managing director of Eesti Raadio, Peeter Sookruus, the transmitter system was in bad shape and in need of renovation. Rummo did acknowledge that the transmitters and technology were old and outdated and in need of updating and that takes money. Privatizing the transmitters would have been the answer, but Rummo asked who would buy such an antiquated system. He observed that since Estonia was such a small country the transmitter system was a natural monopoly.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Where the lack of legislation had hindered the development of Estonia's broadcast system, now a Broadcast Law existed. In the first two years of independence, Estonia did not have legislation for licensing and regulating broadcast stations. Initial direction came from The Riigikogu's Culture Commission, as a temporary arrangement until a law was enacted. A working group, composed of government, broadcast, program producers, and musician representatives, met and drafted a broadcast law for consideration by The Riigikogu (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996).

The law that was enacted was clearly different from the draft. The provisions that were changed significantly impacted the development of Estonia's broadcast system, perpetuating and exacerbating issues that existed before the law. Both public and private broadcasters agreed that the 1994 Broadcast Law did not work (R. Lang, personal communication, November 1996). The law failed to clearly define a role for public broadcasting in Estonia. It also contributed to and exacerbated the ongoing conflict between private and public broadcasters over advertising on public stations. It permitted public broadcasting to supplement their government-subsidized budgets with advertising revenues, competing with private broadcasters for a share of limited commercial dollars. Lään (personal communication, May 1998) noted that commercials on public stations continued to be an issue that perpetuated the conflict between public and private broadcasters.

However, public broadcasting officials advocated a need for public broadcasting to have advertising to buy quality programming. Rebané (personal communication, December 1996) said

that part of the strategy for public television was to program entertainment to attract audiences to the cultural and information shows sandwiched among them. Otherwise, he believed educational, cultural, and information programming alone would have attracted small audiences making the cost associated with the production and transmission of such shows a very high price for the size of viewership. But many among the private broadcasters felt that there was too much entertainment and that public broadcasting actually competed for audiences to attract advertising dollars.

What was important in looking at the development of Estonia's broadcast legislation was that it was accomplished democratically. Although the law itself is imperfect, the process involved discussions, deliberations, and debate by various interest groups in Estonia. Overall, it was a good learning experience in the democratic approach to governing for the Estonians. Another point concerning the 1994 Estonian Broadcast Law was that it served to inhibit the development of an independent private broadcast system rather than promote one. By ambiguously defining public broadcasting system's mission, and allowing it to supplement government subsidies with advertising revenues, the law reinforced the dominant position of Estonia's public radio and television stations. The system of financing the public stations also open them to government interference due to their dependence on government subsidies and government owned transmitters. This dominance inhibited the growth and development of a private broadcasting system, independent of government control. Till these issues are resolved, the growth of an independent democratic broadcast media system in Estonia will be limited.

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## APPENDIX

For this study the following people were interviewed:

- Eelmaa, Epp. Operations Manager, Kanal Kaks (Channel 2 TV). Interviewed December 1996.
- Hausmann, Ilona. Eesti Raadio, International Relations Department. Interviewed December 1996.
- Haldre, Herkki. Advisor, Hanasbank. Radio consultant. Past Director of Eesti Raadio. Interviewed December 1996.
- Holmberg, Simon. Deputy Director, Baltic Media Centre. Interviewed December 1996. Telephone interview May 1998.
- Hunt, Margus. Marketing Director, Eesti Telekom (Estonian Telephone Company Limited). Interviewed November and December 1996.
- Jõesaar, Andres. Vice-President, TV3. Interviewed December 1996.
- Kokkota, Evelin. Information Assistant, United States Information Service, American Embassy, Tallinn, Estonia. Interviewed November 1996.
- Laanejare, Nele. Chief Editor at new television station TV1. Interviewed November 1996.
- Läään, Vello. Director, Raadio Tartu. Past Director of Estonian State Radio. Telephone Interview. May 1998.
- Lang, Rein. President and General Manager, AS Trio Ltd. Raadio Kuku. Interviewed November 1996.
- Laur, Marju. Vice Head Department of Post and Telecommunications, Ministry of Transport and Communications. Past Deputy Ministry of Culture. Interviewed November and December 1996.
- Laurinstin, Marju.. Professor, Tartu University. Interviewed December 1996.
- Loit, Urmas. Managing Director, Eesti Ringhaalingute Liit (Association of Estonian Broadcasters). Interviewed November 1996.
- Middleton, Victoria. Public Affairs Officer, United States Information Service, American Embassy, Tallinn, Estonia. Interviewed November 1996.
- Palts, Tõnis. CEO and Chairman, AS Levicom. Interviewed December 1996.

**Assessing the Hierarchy of Influences Theory of Content:  
Coverage of the Cultural Revolution in China by *Time* and *Newsweek*,  
1966-69**

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**Abstract**

This paper examines press performance under atypical conditions to assess the generalizability of the Shoemaker and Reese (1996) Hierarchy of Influences theory of media content. It studied the two leading U.S. weekly news magazines' reporting of a culturally, politically, geographically, and ideologically distant story. The overarching first level, ideology, was assumed to operate, while the influence of the other four levels (extramedia, organizational, media routines and individual) was documented; the model was found to be robust but somewhat culture bound.

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## **Assessing the Hierarchy of Influences Theory of Content: Coverage of the Cultural Revolution in China by *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-69**

*No one had a very clear idea of what the score was, who the players were, and sometimes, not even what the game was all about* (Coffey et al. 1977, p. 77)

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Cultural Revolution, which affected tens of millions of Chinese in the 1960s, occurred during the Cold War, when much of the human race was aligned with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the United States. During the Cultural Revolution, the entire state apparatus of China was ransacked, the official media system in China was severely undermined and the American media were kept outside China. Given these extremely difficult circumstances, how did the U.S. press perform during this cataclysmic period? Karol (1967, p. vii), a French China, expert wrote: “A taste for sensationalism and – particularly in the United States – a hostility toward Chinese Communism have led the press to put the limelight on ‘shattering’ items of news, even when they seemed hardly possible or even obviously false.”

In the 1950s and 1960s, given the ideology of anti-communism, a key question is “how the dominant ideology is linked to the norms and practices, or ‘occupational ideology,’ of media workers” (Becker 1984, p. 73). Even in the 1980s, there were “no socialists in the strikingly uniform media” (Chomsky quoted in Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 244). Furthermore, still today the terms “Marxist” and “Communist” have even “more negative connotations than ‘Socialist’” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 250).

#### *Purpose of study*

This paper will examine press performance under atypical conditions to assess the generalizability of the Shoemaker and Reese (1996) Hierarchy of Influences theory of media content. The model may be the best the mass communication field has (Lacy 1998, p. 2), but it rests largely on domestic research. To further test the model, his paper will study the two leading

U.S. weekly news magazines' reporting of a culturally, politically, geographically and ideologically distant story. The overarching first level, ideology, supersedes and limits the influence of the other four levels (extra-media, organizational, media routines and individual) in the model.

#### *Covering and assessing the Cultural Revolution in China*

The U.S.-China relationship had dropped to its lowest point in history before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. government's support for the Nationalists on Taiwan and its refusal to recognize the mainland's legitimacy kept relations tense.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles eventually forbade all Americans to visit China. "By threatening any violators with loss of their passports and possible fines or imprisonment – and by instigating direct Presidential appeal to a few important publishers who were inclined to defy him – the Secretary managed for years to keep America effectively cut off from any direct news of the great story of the Chinese revolution (Snow 1961 p. 8).

Periodic talk regarding correspondent exchanges came to naught. A key exception, Edgar Snow, wrote, "Officially, I entered China as a-writer-not-a-correspondent, while in Washington I entered as a-correspondent-not-a-writer" (Snow 1961 p.10). By 1966, Washington had authorized more than 100 American correspondents to go to China, but Beijing showed no sign of welcoming them. As China launched the Cultural Revolution and the United States plunged deeper into the Vietnam War, the matter of newsmen's exchange lost any priority it had held (Chang, 1999).

The assessment of the Cultural Revolution has been unusually difficult because of the complexity of the events, the uncertain reliability of the information, the lack of a clear perspective on the events that took place during that period, and the extreme and changing evaluations of the Cultural Revolution in both China and the West.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Chinese lauded the Red Guard movement as a creative and effective way to arouse the broad masses to expose and destroy the dark aspects of society. As late as 1977, even after the purge of the Gang of Four, Chinese leaders continued to

portray the Cultural Revolution in glowing terms. Hua Guofeng, who succeeded Mao Zedong after his death in 1976, remarked that events like the Cultural Revolution should occur in China every few years. Within two years, however, the official line had completely changed. (*Beijing Review*, July 6, 1981).

The Chinese reassessment of the Cultural Revolution has been replicated in the West. Harding (1993) observed that, during the 1970s, the Cultural Revolution was described by many Americans as a worthy example of Mao's desire to preserve communitarian, egalitarian, and populist values in the course of economic development and of his conviction that "bureaucracy and modernization do not necessarily lead to an improved quality of life" (p. 232). As the Chinese have become more critical of the Cultural Revolution, so too have Western observers. Mao has been compared to Hitler and Stalin, and the Cultural Revolution has been likened to the Inquisition and the Holocaust. The origins of the movement are traced not to a noble vision, but to a perverted perception of China's social and political problems in the mid-1960s.

What pictures media in the aforementioned countries formed in the heads of their audiences (Lippman 1971) is unclear. Certainly the accounts and explanations of what was happening in China were perplexing to people both inside and outside of China.

During the Cultural Revolution, especially when it was in full swing from 1966 through 1969, China was in a state of chaos, and its communication channels with the outside world were cut off with few exceptions. For example, no major Chinese leader made a trip abroad in the entire two-year period after the Cultural Revolution broke out. By autumn 1967, Beijing had called home all its ambassadors posted abroad except two (Ness, 1970, p. 247). Because of the tensions between the two countries, there was virtually no public communication channel between China and the United States from 1957 to 1971 except for the ambassadorial talks in Geneva.

Various media in China - the main news sources for the foreign press - were among the major government departments Red Guard factions vied to control and severely impaired. Seasoned

reporters could occasionally discern subtle changes in the management of the media. A source in a Newsweek story was identified as "Nanchang's government radio station controlled by Beijing red guards" (January 3, 1967). Compared with the dwindling official publications, publications by belligerent Red Guard factions mushroomed, churning out facts as well as fictions. Wall posters, mostly written with a brush pen in big Chinese characters, became unique tools of political communication. Because of their ability to read Chinese characters, Japanese correspondents in Beijing often became the first to apprise the western press of what was going on in China.

While China was thrown into turmoil and one bewildering event after another happened, the American press corps, which had a sizable presence in China during both world wars and China's civil war, could only observe from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tokyo. Hong Kong became the leading observation post because of its geographical and cultural proximity to China.

On-the-spot, first-hand coverage is almost always the first choice for reporters. But the situation in China in the 1960s, like that in most communist countries, made on-the-spot coverage for most western correspondents—except for Toronto's *Globe and Mail*—impossible. Stanley Karnow (1974), a veteran China reporter, blamed China's own lack of openness for America's "narrow" perceptions of China: "Hong Kong, for all its value as an observation post, is no place from which to attempt to grasp the physical magnitudes and human dimensions of China" (p. 77).

When it comes to China coverage, American media have been under fire for decades. "A classic instance in the U.S. was the 'Chinese lobby' whose strongly pro-Nationalist and sharply anti-Communist activities can be traced to certain American congressmen and journalists with an enduring affection for Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists," a China researcher observed (Oxnam, 1978, p. 41). He noted that American school children learn little about the other country in their textbooks, while adults generally develop only a superficial knowledge consisting largely of stereotypes reinforced by the limited coverage in "our respective mass media" (p. 31).

A writer and former Beijing correspondent put it more bluntly. "The American frames of China change dramatically from decade to decade, but the underlying behavior of the news organizations does not" (Mann, 1999, p. 102). Explanations for reasons underlying the media performance, however, vary. And the tradition can be traced far back into time (MacKinnon and Friesen, 1987, p. 185).

## II. RELATED STUDIES

Research on the performance of China's mass media during the Cultural Revolution is scant. Because of the destructive role the media played throughout the Cultural Revolution and the special function of the media in China today, the topic remains largely a forbidden area. Similarly, little research exists on Western mass media's coverage, perhaps because "so much defied conventional theories of politics, outsiders quickly put the phenomenon out of mind once the turmoil ceased" (Pye, 1986, p. 597).

Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 262) state the following assumptions (italics in original):  
*From media content we can infer many of the factors that shaped it. . . .*

*Influences on media content can be ranked hierarchically, from the ideological and other macro-system factors to the more micro characteristics of individual media workers.* Each level has its own range of influence but is subjected to and has limits set by each hierarchically superior level.

### *Level I: the Individual*

Weaver and Wilhoit (1991, p. 25) say the effect of journalists' gender, race, sexual orientation, political party affiliation and other demographics is probably minor. Most individual-level research deals with reporters and editors at newspaper and TV newsrooms, but news weeklies operate quite differently.

According to Bradley Martin (2002), former Newsweek Tokyo bureau chief, when Henry Luce began his publication in 1923, "There were no reporters on Time then, just editors and

rewriters.” The rewrite system gave selection and interpretation power to individuals, as long as they knew what spin publisher Henry Luce—Individual No. 1-- wanted in certain areas. One of the sensitive areas was China, where Luce had been born and grew up. After Time began to hire reporters, even the lionized correspondent Theodore White found his copy severely rewritten when he reported that Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist regime was corrupt and that Mao’s forces would likely prevail in China.

The heavy handedness then changed somewhat. White’s resignation “had an inhibiting effect on the practice of changing the meaning of news copy from abroad. Time now found a fresh way to cope with heretical views filed by its correspondents from overseas: it ignored them” (Henry R. Luce. . .1967, p. 73). Thus still in the 1960s, reporters “were considered lower in the pecking order than the rewriters in New York, hardly better than stenographers. It was still the job of the rewriter to decide what spin to put on a story” (Martin 2002). At the time of the Cultural Revolution, no bylines appeared in either news weekly.

Newsweek “had been founded by Averill Harriman and some other Democrats to provide an alternative to Time’s Republican interpretations”(Martin 2002). At the time of the Cultural Revolution, Katharine Graham was chairman of the board of both Newsweek and the Washington Post. Luce, who retired in 1964, named as editor Hedley Donovan, who “has long been one of Luce’s favorites” (Henry R. Luce 1967, p. 73). Luce died in March 1967, during the Cultural Revolution.

#### *Level 2: Media Routines*

Gatekeepers’ “news judgment is the ability to evaluate stories based on agreed-upon news values”, which include a number of intrinsic story characteristics: prominence/ importance (“how many lives it affects”), human interest, conflict and the unusual (deviant) (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 111). Prominence and conflict especially characterize the Cultural Revolution story.

The Cultural Revolution's prominence is undisputed, affecting many lives—though just how many was a matter of educated guesses as to the population of the country and its growth rate. One estimate in 1970 ranged from a low of 720 million to a high of 840 million (Whitaker et al., 1972; Wu, 1973).

Empirical studies have revealed that conflict stories are a major type of story emphasis in foreign news in American media. Having sampled more than 1,000 news shows for the period 1972-1981, James Larson (1984) found that 27 percent of all network TV news stories involving foreign affairs and over a third of all video (film) reports from foreign lands carried crisis themes.

### *Level 3: Organizational factors*

As (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 155) state:

In one sense, the organization formalizes conflict, an inevitable part of large, complex media operations, and the structure of these organizations represents the playing field upon which employees contend for scarce resources. . .The uncertainty of news leaves considerable room for the influence of organizational politics.

Sigal (1973, p.21) makes note of division-of-labor “lines of cleavage along which organization conflict crystallizes.” The news weekly cleavages are two-fold in the case of correspondents overseas: correspondent vs. writer and domestic vs. international domains. Originated by Time and adopted by Newsweek, as noted above, both publications used at the time of the Cultural Revolution the strong-writer system whereby correspondents in the field funneled material to New York, where it was rewritten into a comprehensive story. An overseas reporter was even more removed from the center of power than were domestic reporters outside of New York.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 122) comment that journalists’ “heavy reliance on each other for ideas. . . constitutes an important organizational routine. . . [which makes] news so similar across media.” The Cultural Revolution story was, by and large, a recycling venture.

Sources can be thought of as a routine (as opposed to an enterprise) channel if they are used habitually and scheduled by someone else. Sigal (1973) cites such routine channels as official

proceedings (trials, hearings), press releases and press conferences, as well as background briefings and leaks.

*Level 4: Extra-media factors*

Sources. Sources, besides being a routine channel, can also exert extramedia influence (Nimmo 1978). Even when the journalist is in a position to observe an event directly, Leon Sigal (1973) observed, he prefers not to offer his own interpretations: "For the reporters, in short, most news is not what has happened, but what someone says has happened" (p. 69).

Although they play an important role, sources had largely evaded the attention of the mass communication researchers until the 1980s (Culbertson 1980; Stempel and Culbertson 1984). Studies have demonstrated that the elite, or the powerful, have been the dominant sources in the media of both the United States and other countries, be they totalitarian states or democracies. Elite sources supply most of the information in both national and state newspapers in the United States (Berkowitz, 1987; Lasorsa and Reese, 1990)—especially male, often veiled (Brown et al. 1987).

For the correspondents stationed overseas, political and cultural disparities further complicate the sourcing issue. Those who do not have good language skills have to depend on secondary sources and take whatever they can get. As Newsweek's Bonn bureau chief Andrew Nagorski (1985) commented, most of the daily output with Moscow datelines is nothing more than a repackaging of Soviet propaganda.

In the 1950s, about half of the news about China in the American press used secondary sources, many of which were sources from official Chinese media (Riffe, 1984). One researcher found that anonymous attributions were used in 80 percent of both national and international news stories in Time and Newsweek, and more international stories than national stories contained anonymous attributions (Wulfemeyer, 1985). A study of the New York Times' coverage of the students' democracy movement in China in 1989 likewise found that anonymous sources outnumbered identified sources. Due to lack of government credibility, teachers, students and

scholars, who seldom appeared in foreign affairs coverage, entered news from obscurity and remained there for several years to come (Li 1998).

In building a theory of news content, (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 263) state as a proposition: "Most news comes from 'official' (primarily government) sources." For example, in the early years of the American involvement, the Washington administration misled correspondents to such an extent that many an editor, unable to reconcile what his man in Saigon was reporting with what his man in Washington told him, preferred to use the official version, though the Pentagon Papers proved that the correspondents in Saigon had been right.

Government foreign policy. U.S. policy can affect U.S. media content (Bledsoe et al., 1982; Chang, 1999; Coffey et al. 1977; Dorman and Farhang, 1987; Entman, 1991). Chang (1989), who studied the New York Times and Washington Post's 1950-1984 coverage of China, found that "the more the government favored U.S.-China relations, the more newspapers preferred better relations between the two countries" (p. 504). At about the time of ping-pong diplomacy in the mid- 1970s, "People's Republic of China" replaced the words "Red China," he found.

A study of six reputable newspapers' coverage of China from 1965 to 1968, reconfirms the phenomenon of the foreign policy of a newspaper's home country affecting foreign affairs coverage. In this study, the U.S. policy of non-recognition of communist China was contrasted with the more open attitudes of the Canadians, French and British. "The papers split very clearly in their coverage of Mao – the three foreign journals reported his waxing power, while the American papers were saying that his power was waning," according to the study of Le Monde, the Times of London, the Toronto Globe and Mail, the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times (Coffey and et al., 1997, p. 83).

#### *Level 5: Ideology*

Ideology in turn informs and is manifested in U.S. relations with, attitudes about and policy toward communist China. Although not specifically about China, a study of U.S. press

coverage of foreign policy crises after the Second World War tapped into the ideological level of influences. It found that reporters tended to be more hawkish than official sources when the United States faced a communist foe and more dovish when the United States suffered a military setback (Zaller and Chiu, 1996).

In a study of the New York Times, ABC, NBC and CBS, Shoemaker et al (1991) found only events that were deviant from American values or of economic and political significance to the United States were covered. World events most often in the news were deviant events and those with economic or political significance to the United States. The next most prominent events were deviant, but with low significance.

More recently, Chang and Lee (2001), who likewise studied newspapers and network television, found that normative deviance has lost some predictive power. U.S. involvement and threats to the United States emerged as the strongest predictors of coverage. Finally, Altheide (1987) suggested that reporters frame coverage of foreign nations to conform to images that they perceive readers already hold.

#### *Research Questions*

The hypotheses that Shoemaker and Reese (1996) present about each level and about the links between levels are well grounded in empirical research. However, that research applies mainly to U.S. media in "typical" situations. Is the Hierarchy of Influences model universal? The Cultural Revolution in China stands as an atypical case study useful in assessing the theory, albeit in a limited way. This study does not even come close to exhaustively exploring all components of each level. For example, the extramedia level includes, besides sources and government policies, interest groups, PR campaigns, other media organizations, advertisers, audiences, government controls, the marketplace and technology.

1. How do extra-media factors affect overseas content under atypical conditions?
2. How do organizational factors affect overseas content under atypical conditions?

3. How do media routines affect overseas content under atypical conditions?
4. How do individual media workers affect overseas content under atypical conditions?

### III. METHOD

Stories in domestic editions of Time and Newsweek from 1966 to 1969 were content analyzed. News magazines, the U.S. national print media, are worth studying because of their large readership and potential influence in attitude formation.

#### *The news weeklies*

Newsweek and Time currently play and, even more in the 1960s, played a crucial role as widely read sources of international news. With numerous overseas bureaus supplying material for both domestic and international editions, they report to a worldwide audience. By contrast, the general-interest newspapers with extensive overseas bureaus--the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post --all have local constituencies. As daily publications "of record" that can run to hundreds of pages, they do not serve the same highlighting function as do the news weeklies; removed from the cacophony of daily events, the domestic edition of a news weekly can "summarize the dominant American reading of a news event" (Wall 1997, 413).

Furthermore, they have larger circulations than the newspapers. The New York Times has a circulation of about 1 million, compared to 1998 SRDS figures showing that Time had a paid circulation of 4,176,781, and Newsweek 3,360,540. Readership is about seven times greater than circulation. According to Newsweek, its editions had a worldwide readership of more than 24 million in 1996. Despite their large readership, the news weeklies are surprisingly under researched. Gerlach (1987) found that only 6% of Journalism Quarterly articles 1964-83 dealt with all types of magazines, while almost no research dealt with news weeklies' international coverage and role.

#### *Selection of stories*

Because the research focused on the news magazines' coverage of a foreign country in the absence of on-site correspondents, stories about the events that are closely associated with the

Cultural Revolution but which happened outside mainland China, such as in Hong Kong and Macao, were not coded. Also, stories with no relation whatsoever to the Cultural Revolution, such as those about pandas, were likewise not coded.

The coded period is from May 1966 through June 1969. While no universally accepted definition of the Cultural Revolution exists, the Chinese government officially defines it as from 1966 to the death of Mao Zedong and the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976, the so-called "ten years of turmoil" or "ten years of turbulence." However, many scholars hold that the Cultural Revolution was concentrated from 1966 through 1969, the most turbulent period. May was chosen as a starting point, the month in which Mao's first big-character poster appeared. After central authorities issued orders to stop armed factional fighting in late 1969, the army took over control--an event regarded by many Western researchers as the revolution's de facto end. With no consensus on the exact ending point in 1969, the authors chose June so they could have a round number -- three years -- of data.

The main goal in choosing the time period was to focus on the years when the door to China was closed. By late 1969, the door was opening. The Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1969 saw the election of a new CPC Central Committee, the approval of a new Politburo, and the adoption of a new party constitution. The communication channels between China and the rest of the world were one by one restored. In particular, there were signs that the relationships between the United States and China began relaxing in comparison with those between China and the Soviet Union. A sign was, as Newsweek noticed, that the penalty for Chinese listening to Radio Moscow could lead to capital punishment, while the punishment for listening to the Voice of America was re-education (April 14, 1969). Two years later, the first newsmen were exchanged between China and the United States, following ping-pong diplomacy. In 1979, diplomatic relations were established.

Once the dates had been chosen, first author used microfiche to examine each issue of the two news weeklies for relevant stories. The Readers' Guide could not be used because of its selective omission of many stories, such as short ones in Newsweek's Periscope section. All stories, including essays such as those in Time, were included.

#### *Coding*

Stories were put under three categories in terms of their length: short, defined as shorter than one fourth of a page; medium, longer than one fourth of a page but shorter than a page; and long, longer than a page. The coding of sources was done at the microfilm room of a major Midwestern university.

The headlines for all stories were copied down for analysis of references to "Red China," in order to judge whether, as U.S. policy changed toward China, the news weeklies reflected that change. Also, Newsweek and Time were compared to see if the anti-Communist, pro-Taiwan stance of Time that Henry Luce had established still affected content-- even though overall the two exhibit more similarities than differences (Yu and Riffe 1989). Sources were coded as people or media. Each medium was noted, while the people were put into categories.

Before the coding work began, eight issues, or more than ten percent, of the total issues of the magazines were randomly pulled from 1966 and 1969 and 21 valid cases were found. Two graduate students were trained to code the stories at the same time. The intercoder reliability, based on the percentage of agreement, ranged from 94 percent to 100 percent. The overall intercoder reliability was 97 percent.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A total of 192 stories appeared in Time (82 stories) and Newsweek (110) from May 1966 through June 1969. Each magazine carried two covers on China during the period.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to judge effects on content of each level of the Shoemaker and Reese Hierarchy of Influences model.

#### *The Individual*

Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 102) downplay the power of individuals, stating that “the exertion of personal will within a mass media organization takes more power than most communicators can wield.” Thus this level is the lowest and least influential in the model. However, a “journalist’s background and personal characteristics will affect media content in proportion to the amount of power the person holds in the organization” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 264). At *Time*, the person with the ultimate power was Commie-hater Henry Luce.

Table 1 shows that at *Time*, the usage of the terms “Red China” and “Communist China” took a nosedive, from near total usage in 1966 to absence in 1968. Although Luce had retired by 1966, it appears that his death in 1967 at the age of 69 occasioned a policy change. The usage of loaded, unofficial terms for the name of a nation at *Time* contrasts sharply with minimal use at *Newsweek* (consistently 10%-15%). Of course, without an eyewitness to the gatekeeping process of the 1960s, individual influence of one individual is merely circumstantial evidence.

#### *Media routines*

As Table 2 shows, by 1969 the volume of coverage had decreased dramatically in both news weeklies- down to 13 stories in *Newsweek* and 12 stories in *Time*. Since by 1969, the chaos and violent conflicts had subsided, the news values of deviance and conflict appear to be confirmed. In overseas reporting, conflict is an especially strong newsmaker. Many of the 18 instances of veiled U.S. government sources being quoted (Table 3) presumably constitute a routine, non-enterprise background briefings.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 130) define experts as

. . . the person relied on by journalists to put events into context and explain the meaning of news. Because the objectivity routine prevents reporters from overtly expressing their point of view, they must find experts to provide understandable analysis of the meaning of news events. The choice of experts has an important influence on how that meaning is shaped.

Indeed, the 57 U.S. think tank persons, China watchers, etc. (Table 3) constitute the single largest category of sources for news weekly coverage. Most —52 of 57—are veiled.

#### *Organizational factors*

No tables accompany the following “findings,” but one can still infer influences on content from news weeklies’ organizational structures. Only with access to original dispatches about the Cultural Revolution could one document the turf battles and their results, but these comments from Bradley Martin, a Newsweek overseas bureau chief (in Japan) attest to the constant struggle for space in the domestic editions. Both Martin and his predecessor decided not

to worry unduly about domestic but just feed international, the reliable customer. . .  
. . a typical situation was that international would schedule a piece, domestic would schedule a shorter version of the same piece, then the domestic story would be bumped by something that seemed more exciting to the editors there (almost anything was more exciting to the foreign desk than Japan) toward the end of the week (Bradley Martin, personal communication, March 29, 1998).

The news weeklies usually solved organizational conflicts by giving New York the final word.

#### *Extramedia factors: sources*

Sources, which “have a tremendous effect on mass media content” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 178), are the first-listed component of the extramedia level. Table 5 shows that 66.4 percent of the sources were veiled, agreeing with previous studies, which found that the use of veiled sources was prevalent in international affairs coverage (Bledsoe et al., 1982; Riffe, 1984; Riffe et al., 1993).

Table 3 (above the heavy line) shows that correspondents did not witness the Cultural Revolution first hand; their stories were nearly 99 percent based on sources. The number of sources from mainland China (the four rows below the heavy line) ranked the first, standing at 171,

or 39.9 percent of the total. The number of sources from the United States (87) ranked second.. Notably, 69 cases, or 16.1 percent of the total sources, did not belong to any type, indicating that it is impossible to tell their locations, citizenship or official affiliations from the contexts in which they were used. In fact, many stories, especially those that appeared in Periscope in Newsweek, did not use any source at all.

The study found that unofficial Chinese sources were veiled, apparently as a policy (96.6 percent), but official Chinese sources' information was usually attributed. U.S. sources were predominantly veiled--more than 85 percent of those from the U.S. government and more than 90 percent of the think-tank spokespersons and other China experts.

Table 4 gives details about the Chinese sources that correspondents used for the lion's share (nearly 40 percent) of information for their stories. Chinese print media were quoted 52 times, and Chinese broadcast media 50 times. Worth noting is that, while the print media were concentrated in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong, the broadcast media quoted were spread over the country.

#### *Ideology*

This level is the hardest to show and the easiest to know. Evidence at a simplistic level can be seen in Table 1. During the Cold War, it was standard practice to use loaded labelling to refer to mainland China (a geographical reference) or the People's Republic of China, the correct name of the country, but a term that was never used in a headline. Confirming Chang's (1989) observation, the use of Red China conformed to pervading ideology that it was acceptable not to use the official name of this particular country. The Cultural Revolution occurred at a time when the dominant ideology was changing, as the change in usage of the loaded terms by 1969 attests.

Table 1. Coverage of China in *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-1969: Headline References

	<i>Newsweek</i>				<i>Time</i>			
	China	Red/Comm*	Total	% Red	China	Red/Comm*	Total	% Red
<b>1966</b>	12	2	14	14.3%	2	16	18	88.9%
<b>1967</b>	25	4	29	13.8%	12	23	35	65.7%
<b>1968</b>	18	2	20	10%	15	0	15	0%
<b>1969</b>	8	1	9	11.1%	7	2	9	22%

\*Red China/ China's, Communist China/ China's, Communists, but not Red Army/Guards

Note: The terms "PRC" or "People's Republic of China" were never used in headlines

Table 2. Coverage of China in *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-1969: Volume of Stories

	<i>Newsweek</i>	<i>Time</i>
<b>1966</b>	26	20
<b>1967</b>	41	36
<b>1968</b>	30	14
<b>1969</b>	13	12
<b>Totals</b>	110	82

Table 3: Coverage of China in *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-1969: Type of Sources

	Specified	Veiled	Total
First-hand coverage	5 (1.2 percent)	1 (.2 percent)	6 (1.4 percent)
Chinese print media	40 (9.3 percent)	12 (2.8 percent)	52 (12.1 percent)
Chinese broadcast media	41 (9.6 percent)	9 (2.1 percent)	50 (11.7 percent)
Unofficial Chinese media	1 (.2 percent)	28 (6.5 percent)	29 (6.8 percent)
Other sources in China	8 (1.9 percent)	32 (7.5 percent)	40 (9.3 percent)
Hong Kong media	1 (.2 percent)	4 (.9 percent)	5 (1.2 percent)
Government sources in Hong Kong		2 (.5 percent)	2 (.5 percent)
Non-governmental sources in HK	4 (.9 percent)	24 (56 percent)	29 (6.8 percent)
Japanese media	2 (.5 percent)	3 (.7 percent)	5 (1.2 percent)
Japanese governmental sources		1 (.2 percent)	1 (.2 percent)
Taiwan governmental sources		2 (.5 percent)	2 (.5 percent)
U.S. Media	1 (.2 percent)		1 (.2 percent)
U.S. governmental sources	3 (.7 percent)	18 (4.2 percent)	21 (4.9 percent)
Thinktank spokespersons, China watchers et al	5 (1.2 percent)	52 (12.1 percent)	57 (13.3 percent)
Other U.S. sources	6 (1.4 percent)	3 (.7 percent)	9 (2.1 percent)
Sources from other countries	27 (6.3 percent)	25 (6.1 percent)	52 (12.1 percent)
Others		69 (16.1 percent)	69 (16.1 percent)
Total	144 (33.6 percent)	285 (66.4 percent)	429 (100 percent)

Table 4: Coverage of China in *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-1969: Official Chinese Media as News Sources

	Frequency	Percent
<i>People's Daily</i>	21	4.9
Radio Beijing	14	3.3
Xinhua News Agency	14	3.3
<i>Red Flag</i>	9	2.1
<i>Liberation Army Daily</i>	3	0.7
Army newspaper	2	0.5
Guangdong Radio	2	0.5
<i>Air Force News</i>	1	0.2
Anhui Radio	1	0.2
<i>China Youth</i>	1	0.2
Chinese broadcasts	1	0.2
Heilongjiang Radio	1	0.2
Party press	1	0.2
<i>Peking Review</i>	1	0.2
Radio Fuzhou	1	0.2
<i>Red Star (Army Newspaper)</i>	1	0.2
Shandong provincial radio	1	0.2
<i>Southern Daily</i>	1	0.2
Xi'an Radio	1	0.2
<i>Wen Hui Bao</i>	1	0.2

Table 5: Coverage of China in *Time* and *Newsweek*, 1966-1969: Identification of Sources

	<i>Time</i>	<i>Newsweek</i>	Total
Veiled	74 (17.2 percent)	211 (49.2 percent)	285 (66.4 percent)
Specified	83 (19.3 percent)	61 (14.2 percent)	144 (33.6 percent)
Total	157 (33.6 percent)	272 (63.4 percent)	429 (100 percent)

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The Shoemaker and Reese (1996) Hierarchy of Influences model held up well in the atypical reporting milieu of the Cultural Revolution, considering the few points discussed in this paper. However, it became clear in the course of the project that certain elements of the model are culture bound. For example, the model presumes “sources” and “government sources” to be human; as Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 155) state, “Reporters are typically oriented toward their sources, with whom they are in most frequent contact.” Yet the expulsion of correspondents from China cut off contact from human Chinese government sources. The model should allow for a more fluid definition of “government source.”

Furthermore, the model assumes a contrast between government sources (extramedia level) and media channels (media routines level). However, during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government sources were the (official) media. Indeed, in any controlled press system, the clean division of levels does not exist. The model should allow for media channels to play varying roles, including operation at higher levels than media routines. Consequently, the routine of, for example, “how carefully the three networks monitor each other’s coverage” (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 122) works differently in controlled-press societies. The Western routine operates horizontally, with ABC checking CBS and both checking the New York Times; the Chinese routine operates vertically, with media workers looking upward for guidance and controllers sending the correct version downward for compliance.

This study delved only superficially – by looking at the terms “Red China” and “Communist China” in headlines-- into the level which supersedes and permeates all others, *ideology* (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, ch. 9). A future study could reanalyze the stories themselves for sentiments of anti-communism, which was an ideological given in the 1950s and 1960s.

Another line of future research could be to interview any still-living rewriters and editors from the 1966-69 era. In the case of *Time*, a change of policy seems obvious, with July 28, 1967,

being the watershed. Beginning on that date, never again did *Time* use "Red China" in a headline; before that date, virtually every story used the term. A slight presence of loaded terms shows up in 1969 only because the term "Communists" is used in two stories' headlines. Did "Red China" disappear in July 1967 after some months of discussion, following the death of Henry Luce in March of that year? Young editors from that era must still be around; the authors intend to locate them or their memoirs. In addition, they would like to interview *Newsweek* editors, who seem to have consciously avoided the use of loaded terms, which seem so quaint and dated today.

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**PRESS FREEDOM IN HONG KONG BEFORE AND AFTER 1997  
---NEWSPAPERS' COVERAGE OF CHINA**

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Press freedom in Hong Kong Before and After 1997  
--- Newspapers' Coverage of China

### **Abstract**

Through a content analysis with an interrupted series design, three newspapers in Hong Kong, *Ming Pao*, *Sing Tao Jih Pao* and *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, were found to have become more favorable to the Chinese government immediately before the hand-over of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997. However, some newspapers appeared to have resumed their critical stances toward China several years after the hand-over.

## Introduction

Until 1994, Hong Kong was one of the few privileged places in Asia where journalists enjoyed freedom of speech, without tight control from the government (Chan, 1994). According to Christopher Patten, the last British Governor of Hong Kong, press freedom had been crucial to Hong Kong's development and it was vital to the social and economic progress of this city. Whether or not China would allow Hong Kong press freedom will determine the way China is regarded by the world, and by Hong Kong itself. It will also assess "how far the hopes and possibilities that Hong Kong has created are given reality in the next decade" (AFP Wire Service, Jan 27, 1991).

It has been five years since Hong Kong was formally handed to China and the city still maintains its unique political, economic, and legal systems. The city is still regarded as a highly autonomous Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China under the framework of "One country, Two systems". It was designed by the late Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping (Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong, Article 5, 1984; Hong Kong SAR Basic Law, Article 23, 1990). So far, the media system has not experienced any explicit or drastic changes. Back in 2001, Tung Chee-hwa, the Hong Kong's chief executive, assured U.S. President George Bush that religious and press freedom were "alive and kicking" in the metropolis (BBC News, Hong Kong leader says freedom is safe, July 12, 2001). At the same time, some critics were arguing that freedom of speech in Hong Kong was gradually declining. According to these critics, the press in Hong Kong has been intimidated into self-restriction by the Chinese government. Since then, a number of problems related to the infringement of press freedom have emerged, due to the Chinese and the HK governments' influences (Hong Kong Journalists Association, 2000).

In fact many were worried before the hand-over of the city, that China would brutally control both press freedom and independence in Hong Kong as it did in the Chinese mainland (Ching, 1999). Thus, the assertion that freedom of speech is alive and the criticism that it has declined appear to contradict each other. It is therefore necessary

to empirically examine whether or not there have been any attitude changes in the Hong Kong press after 1997.

This study is a content analysis in an interrupted series design of two rightist (*Sing Tao Jih Pao* and *Hong Kong Economic Journal*) and one centrist Chinese newspapers (*Ming Pao*) in Hong Kong. It aims to examine whether or not there has been any significant changes to the ideological standings in their coverage of the Chinese mainland after Hong Kong was handed over. Such study will improve our understanding of the interactions between political power and freedom of speech in a unique political entity as Hong Kong is. It will also contribute to the study of the future of the mass media in Hong Kong.

## Literature Review

### *Conflicting predictions on destiny of Hong Kong's Press*

Before the hand-over of the city, people from around the world were worried that the Chinese government would damage the freedom of the press in Hong Kong as it has done in Mainland China. The ideological criteria of the Hong Kong press and its Mainland China counterparts have been quite different. On the whole, Hong Kong has practiced the western model of journalism, with an emphasis on timeliness, factual reporting, and a "watchdog" function (Lee & Chu, 1998). A study conducted in 1990 showed that nearly 95 percent of Hong Kong journalists considered objective reporting and rapid dissemination of information important. The same study reported that less than 19 percent agreed that media could slant reports in promoting government policies (Chan et al., 1996).

With regards to the influence of China's ruling, some researchers believed that the "One Country, Two Systems" policy would guarantee freedom of speech in Hong Kong and did not consider it in jeopardy (Lo, 1998). They thought that Hong Kong newspapers would continue functioning pretty much as they did in the past (Ching, 1999). Press people adhered to their belief in free press and attempted to show the Chinese officials that what they were doing was in the best interest of the Hong Kong people and therefore Chinese officials should let them be (Elliott Cohen, 1997). Besides, it is noted that the Chinese government was aware that it would not be wise to treat the Hong Kong press the same way they were treating the press in Mainland China. Only a strong media system could fully exploit Hong Kong's role as a window of China (Ying Chan, 1999). On the other hand, some media people regarded China's promises to respect the autonomy of Hong Kong and its speech freedom as merely words on paper. In examining the U.S. major newspaper coverage of Hong Kong's hand-over, 54.3% of the news stories showed that press freedom would change for the worst in Hong Kong (Lee et al, 2001). A study conducted by Chan in 1994 (Chan, 1994) found that Hong Kong residents and members of the media equally shared those fears. He was concerned that "China would

crack down on the local media in subtly but eventually would bring the media to its heels" (Chan, 1994).

Furthermore, Hong Kong's Basic Law, adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress on April 4<sup>th</sup>, gives an overriding power of final interpretation of Hong Kong SAR constitution to the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (Basic Law, Article 158). The HK Basic Law stipulates that Hong Kong shall enact laws on its own "to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition and subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies" (Basic Law, Article 23). Thus, many saw this Article as an ominous sign that the constitutional independence of Hong Kong's future was endangered. Such concern was heightened later when Xi Yang, a reporter of the Hong Kong's *Ming Pao*, was arrested on September 27, 1993 on the charges of espionage and endangering national security (Ching, 1999).

The worries about press independence and freedom were not only based on inexplicit laws and regulations, but also on what the Chinese officials said and did before 1997. Mr. Lu Ping, Director of the Chinese State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, once said that Hong Kong press could continue criticizing the Chinese government after 1997, but that the Hong Kong Democratic Party and the press should both be under regulation. There was only one limitation: journalists should not support Taiwan Independence, or "Two Chinas", or "One China, One Taiwan" (ABC News, June 1996). The Chinese Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, warned that the Hong Kong media could put forward criticisms, but not rumors or lies, neither were they allowed to put forward personal attacks on Chinese leaders (Cohen, 1997). Tung Chee-hwa, chief executive-designated of Hong Kong also said "slanderous, derogative remarks and attacks against China's leaders should be illegal" (Id.). These comments suggested that after 1997 the law would be different, and that what was once common practice before the hand-over might not be permitted after 1997 anymore (Ching, 1996).

### *Self-Censorship*

Most research on individual decision-making of news selection in Hong Kong media under the impact of sovereignty turnover concentrates on self-censorship. Chin-Chuan Lee (1998), a professor with Minnesota University, examined the transition of Hong Kong. He defined self-censorship as "a set of editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, and as a change of emphasis to the choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, their organizations, and even the entire media community in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishments from the power structure." It was observed that Chinese authorities would have little need to impose censorship or impose a direct ban on publications, because self-censorship was on the rise (Martin, Wilson & Meng, 1994).

The vague statements and ambiguous rumblings by Chinese officials prove very effective in curbing the press in the form of self-censorship (Elliot Cohen, 1997). Hong Kong journalists became very concerned about the future condition of the freedom of the press. A survey conducted in 1990 interviewed 522 journalists and found that 68 percent of the journalists working in centrist media believed that press freedom in the late transition period, that is right before 1997, would be reduced. Seventy nine percent of them thought that press freedom would be reduced after July 1, 1997. About one-third of the journalists surveyed said that they wanted to immigrate to another country before the changeover (Chan, 1990). In 1996, another survey of more than 1,044 media professionals showed that 25 percent of them admitted self-censorship on sensitive issues regarding China and 50 percent of them said that they believed colleagues did so. Joseph Man Chan came to a very pessimistic conclusion. Unless measures were taken to safeguard the integrity of the press, its freedom would be seriously eroded (Chan 1998).

In addition, China's official Xinhua News Agency enjoyed power in Hong Kong by setting news agenda and defining an opinion climate favorable to China's assumption of sovereignty in 1997. Xinhua had a very particular influence upon the centrist and rightist media that depended on its service (Joseph Man Chan, 1989).

Intimidation was another factor that pressured Hong Kong journalists to self-censorship. As an example Xi Yang, *Ming Pao's* reporter, was imprisoned by the Chinese government in 1994 by charging him of stealing state secrets. Such case inevitably constitutes a psychological threat to Hong Kong reporters covering mainland affairs (Chan P.K., 1994). Although scholarly research over self-censorship after 1997 has been very meager, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) admitted in his annual report in 1999 that self-censorship had always been a problem. In 1999, a prominent Chinese dissident, Wang Dan, reported during a visit to Taipei in March of the same year that some Hong Kong editors, in discussing possible articles, asked him to stay away from issues that were politically sensitive (HKJA 1999 Report.) As another example of playing down sensitive news, little coverage was given to the detention of a Taiwanese journalist in August 1998 in Xinjiang, a Muslim region of China (HKJA 1999 Report). In 2001, the issue of self-censorship became even more complex when some journalist tried to report about Falungong, a Chinese spiritual movement. According to the HKJA 2001 report, publications "did not show great sympathy towards the group, reflecting perhaps skepticism on the part of the local population. At the same time, they did not give automatic backing to Beijing's stance on the group" (HKJA 2001 Report).

#### *Media ownership and its influence*

Changes of ownership related to the influence of the Chinese government may also lead to content changes in Hong Kong newspapers. Shoemaker noted that gate-keeping could be studied solely as an organization-level process with one of the most important variable being newspapers' ownership (Shoemaker, 1991). Ching (Ching, 1998) said that the main problem with press freedom in Hong Kong was corporate censorship since media owners were vulnerable to economic pressure. It is observed that by influencing the ownership of local newspapers and magazines via pro-China businessmen, the Chinese government would be more effective on their purpose of exerting control upon the Hong Kong media (Lo, 1998). Even before 1997, China had tried to manage political effect of the transition through media acquisition by pro-China or China-affiliated capitalists (Fung & Lee, 1994). The practice by Murdoch's News Corp in Hong Kong is a good example, which has been famous for its pro-Beijing stance (Lee

& Chu, 1998). In 1993, Murdoch withdrew BBC news from his Star TV in Hong Kong to appease the Chinese government after BBC produced a documentary about late Chinese leader Mao Tsedong (Guardian, December 19, 2001).

Analysis of what happened to the *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), *Ming Pao* and *Sing Tao Jih Pao* could also shed some light on how the ownership might influence newspaper's content. The SCMP has been the Hong Kong's premier English-language paper with a pro-British editorial stance before 1997. In 1993, a Chinese-Malaysian businessman, Robert Kuok, with close ties to China and friend of Chinese former Prime Minister Li Peng purchased 34.9 percent of the share of the SCMP from Murdoch's News Corporation (Cohen, 1997). At that time, Kuok was a major investor on mainland China and was one of China's 90 Hong Kong advisors and Beijing's consultant on Hong Kong affairs. Before the hand-over in 1997, Kuok did not seem to have imposed any pro-Beijing line on the SCMP. However, he hired Feng Xiliang, as a consultant. Feng Xiliang was a founding member of the China Daily, the official English-language newspaper of China. Since then the newspaper's coverage of China has been criticized as being "less vigorous" (Lee, 1998).

*Ming Pao*, a leading intellectual newspaper that is acclaimed for its critical analysis of China's politics, was also criticized because it "conspicuously failed to criticize Beijing in recent years, particularly since 1996" after a businessman close to China bought 60% of the parent company of *Ming Pao* in early 1990's (Lee, 1998). The newspaper published an apology to China on September 12, 1993 on behalf of Xi Yang, its reporter detained in Beijing for alleged "embezzlement of national secrets." For several months in the second half of 1996, *Ming Pao* covered intensively the alleged Japanese invasion of the disputed Diaoyu Islands. It even published a series of articles denouncing as "unpatriotic" those who took a different stance as the nationalistic ones (Fung & Lee, 1994).

*Sing Tao Jih Pao* had a strong emotional tendency favoring Taiwan. However, Sally Aw, its owner, changed her attitude toward Mainland China and personally visited

China's leadership in 1992. In 1993 the Sing Tao Holdings became the first and only overseas press company permitted to launch media ventures in China and even formed a partnership with the People's Daily, China's propaganda mouthpiece, in publishing a nonpolitical journal in a South China city (Fung & Lee, 1994). As a result, it is noted that the editorials of *Sing Tao Jih Pao* have titled toward Beijing and the words like "Republic of China" (Taiwan) in the dates of the newspaper disappeared, together with previously favored terms like "Communist bandits" and "Chinese Communists" (Lo, 1998).

However, impact of ownership on newspaper content has become uncertain for HK press, because their ownership changes very rapidly in recent years with the up and down of economy. For example, *Sing Tao Jih Pao* was sold to the investment bank, Lazard Asia, after being hit by the Asian financial crisis in 1998 and the Aw family's control of the newspaper was ended. In addition, although censorship has been exercised by the journalists out of personal reason and some media due to ownership changes for business profits and security, it is too early and pejorative to jump to a conclusion that press freedom in Hong Kong has been sacrificed by direct intimidation from Chinese communists on mainland. After July 1, 1997, the late Deng Xiaoping once said that the Hong Kong media would still be allowed to criticize the Chinese Communist Party (Ching, 1997). On September 11, 1997, the office of the commissioner of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong reiterated China's pledge not to restrict freedom of the press. On September 24, 1997, toward the end of the first three months of the SAR, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists released a report saying that fears of a clampdown on the media in Hong Kong "have so far proved unfounded" (Ching, 1997). Some researchers also argued that "the dire predictions of the demise of press freedom in Hong Kong did not materialize and that the media have remained as freewheeling and rambunctious as they were in the year leading to the hand-over on July 1, 1997." (Chan, 1999)

Based on the above review, 9 hypotheses are developed:

- H1.** *There is no significant difference generally among negative, positive, neutral, and balanced coverage of the Chinese government in each of the three newspapers.*
- H2.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the negative coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H3.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the positive coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H4.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the neutral coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H5.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the balanced coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H6.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the length of coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H7.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the prominence of coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H8.** *There are no significant differences among the four years with regard to each of the five topics in the coverage of China in each of the three newspapers.*
- H9.** *There is no significant difference among the four years with regard to the location of criticism of China in each of the three newspapers.*

## Methodology

This study adopts an interrupted series design and content analysis of the coverage of Chinese mainland by three HK newspapers to determine if there were any ideological tendency changes after the hand-over of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997. Content analysis was used because of its ability to identify trends of media coverage changes over long periods of time (Kerlinger, 1986).

### *Dependent Variable and Independent Variable*

One-way ANOVA was employed to examine the mean difference of dependant variables. Time was the independent variable, including four treatments, respectively two years before the hand-over and two years after hand-over of Hong Kong. The dependent list included favorableness, length, prominence, page number, location of criticism and headline-body interaction, which reflected the importance of story, framing mechanism found in news text (Entman, 1993; Dickerson, 2001; Bantimaroudis, 2001). Chi-square was employed to compare the non-ratio variables include section, topic and categories.

### *Categorization of newspapers*

Regarding their ideological tendencies, the newspapers in Hong Kong were divided into three categories:

(1) *Leftist*: Leftist newspapers were those who supported mainland government's policies and believed in feasibility of "One Country, Two Systems", or even got funding from the mainland government (Chan & Lee, 1991). They held an anti-colonial rhetoric and harshly criticized the colonial policies. Leftist newspapers primarily included *Wen Wei Pao* and *Ta Kung Pao*.

(2) *Rightist*: Rightist newspapers were those who adhered to the journalist principle of working as watchdogs and criticizing the communist government of China. Before 1997, especially before the Declaration was signed in 1984, most of them were pro-Taiwan (Chan & Lee, 1991). They strongly supported the British pursuit of continued rule over

Hong Kong. These papers included *Hong Kong Times*, *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, *Kung Sheung Yat Pao*, *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, *Apple Daily* and *Hong Kong Economic Journal*.

(3) *Centralist*: The centralist newspapers referred to those who did not have obvious ideological and political tendencies. They did not support the mainland or British government but generally supported the status quo. These papers included *Ming Pao*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* and *Oriental Daily News*.

This research focused on the content changes in the rightist and centralist newspapers because the newspapers accounted for more than 90 percent of circulation in Hong Kong (Chan & Lee, 1988). Besides, only the study of the center-to-right-leaning newspapers of this nature makes academic sense by showing the gate-keeping role variation during fundamental social and political changes. *Ming Pao*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* and *Sing Tao Jih Pao* were selected for analysis, because they have long been regarded as flagships in the centralist and rightist ideological camps. The leftist newspapers were omitted because they had a pro-Beijing history even long before the turnover. These newspapers continued their support of the Chinese government after the hand-over.

#### *Sampling and coding*

All of the news stories, editorials and opinions about China in the three newspapers in the week immediately after the China's National People's Congress (NPC) conferences from 1992 to 2001 were sampled for analysis. The conclusion of the NPC annual session was chosen as a timeframe because it has long been a significant media focus in both China and Hong Kong. The NPC is the highest legislative unit of China. Its main functions and power are formulation of laws, election of politicians and policy formulation. The 2,989 deputies to the NPC meet in full session every March (although seldom, they also meet in April) represent China's 30 provinces, autonomous regions, directly administered cities and the military, including HK after its hand-over. The wide-ranging decisions made at the NPC shape the lives of one 5th of the world's population and have always been under the limelight of media worldwide. Reports about China by

Hong Kong newspapers are also intensified and concentrated during NPC sessions. In addition, the newspaper coverage of China in the week after the NPC sessions is still intense but has less impact from the confounding factor such as governmental press conferences, which are the major information sources when the NPC sessions are going on.

In this research, a total of 1555 stories were sampled and coded. They include 576 from *Ming Pao*, 416 from *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, and 563 from *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. The films of the HK newspapers were obtained from the library of the East Asia Research Center of Columbia University. Two coders independently coded all of the sampled journalistic items. *Scott Pie alpha* for inter-coder reliability was 90 percent.

#### *Measures of variables*

*Topic categories:* This research used the topic categories and sub-categories based on the 1980 project of the IAMCR (International Association for Mass Communication Research) (Stevenson, 1984).

The major categories included the following:

Politics (POLITICS)=1, including PRC domestic politics, international politics, human rights, Tibetan, Taiwan, the Hong Kong-Beijing relationship.

Economics (ECONOM)=2, including PRC domestic politics, its international economics.

Defense (DEFENSE)= 3, including military buildup, nuclear weapons, war crisis.

Science & Culture (SCICUTU)=4, including science, technology, culture, religion, sports.

Society & Law (SCOILEG)=5 including disasters, unrest, terrorism, law, crimes, population and social services/welfare/education.

*Time:* The year of 1997 when Hong Kong was handed over was used as the intervention for the interrupted series design.

*Section* was divided into News, Editorial, and Opinion.

*Length* of news stories was measured as less than 1/8 of the page, 1/8 of the page, ¼ of the page, and more than ¼ of the page.

*Prominence* was measured as above-fold and below-fold.

*Location* of criticism was measured as first half of the story, second half of the story, and no criticism.

*Page Number* includes Front page, Major News/China page, and other pages.

*Headline-body Interaction* was measured as Negative headline/negative body, Negative headline/positive or neutral body, Positive or neutral headline/negative body, and Positive or neutral headline/positive or neutral body. (See Appendix I: Coding Sheet).

*Favorableness*: Favorableness was exhibited in four forms: negative, positive, balanced and neutral (Budd, et al, 1967; Eribo, 1993). Four stories of Hong Kong Economic Journal on March 26<sup>th</sup> could be examples on how favorableness was defined in this research.

Negative coverage refers to those reflecting conflicts, disorganization, instability and weakness. Hong Kong Economic Journal published a commentary on March 26<sup>th</sup> about the internal power struggle inside the Chinese Communist Party. It said the central government of China tried to promote Hu Jintao to be the successor of President Jiang Zemin at the price of preventing development of the leader of China's economic powerhouse Guangdong Province. This commentary shows the "instability" in Chinese politics and was coded as "negative".

Positive stories were defined as those reflecting social cohesion, co-operation, stability and strength. On the same page as the story above about political struggle, there was a commentary about China's policy to commercialize its state-run banks. It supported Premier Zhu Rongji about how important the new move would be for the national economy of China. This commentary was coded as positive.

Balanced stories are those reflecting both positive and negative sides. On the financial page of Hong Kong Economic Journal on March 26<sup>th</sup>, there was a news about the Central Discipline Commission of the Chinese Communist Party issued a notice nationwide to ban dining on public funds. On the one hand, the news shows the magnitude of corruption for communist officials in the form of dining at public funds. On the other hand, it shows the government was making efforts to correct this problem. The news was coded as balanced.

Neutral coverage reports only facts without any hint of ideological stance. The bulk of stories we coded were of this nature. According to Hong Kong Economic Journal, the President of New York Stock Exchange visited Shanghai Stock Exchange on March 25<sup>th</sup>. This story was coded as neutral.

## Results

All of the significant variations were reported in the results. Results of one-way ANOVA were reported first. Then results of the Tukey post hoc tests were displayed to determine the specific differences.

### 1. *Valences of coverage*

The *Sing Tao Jih Pao* had more negative than balanced, neutral or positive coverage of China ( $\chi^2 = 125.923, p < .000$ ). H1 is rejected only for the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*. Results of one-way ANOVA showed that the four valences varied significantly for both of the *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. For the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, only positive and negative coverage varied significantly in the four years. H2, H3, H4 and H5 are rejected for the *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. For the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, H3 and H4 are rejected.

**Table 1. One-way ANOVA of the four valences among the four years**

	<i>Ming Pao</i>		<i>Sing Tao Jih Pao</i>		<i>Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>	
	F	df	F	Df	F	df
Negative	8.003**	3, 573			8.390**	3, 561
Positive	5.337**	3, 573	5.852**	3, 415	7.658**	3, 561
Neutral	14.031**	3, 573	2.943*	3, 415	10.024**	3, 561
Balanced	5.514	3, 573			6.865**	3, 561

\*\*. P<.001, \*. P<.05

Table 2 of the Tukey post hoc test showed that for the *Ming Pao*, negative coverage were significantly less in 1995 than in 1992, 1998 and 2001 (The numeric value is the outcome of the column minus the row). Positive coverage in 1995 was less than in 1992 and in 2001. Neutral coverage was more in 1995 than in 1992 and 2001. Balanced coverage was significantly more in 1995 than in 1992 and 1998, and more in 2001 than in 1998. For the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, there was more positive coverage in 2001 than in 1992 and 1995, and in 1998 than in 1992. Neutral coverage decreased significantly in 1998 than in 1992.

For the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, negative coverage in 1995, 1998 and 2001 was significantly less than in 1992. Positive coverage in 1998 and 2001 was significantly more than in 1995. Neutral coverage was also more in 1995 than in 1992, 1998 and 2001. Balanced coverage was significantly less in 1992 than in 1998 and 2001.

**Table 2. Tukey post hoc test of one-way ANOVA of negative, positive, neutral and balanced coverage of the four newspapers**

		<i>Ming Pao</i>			<i>Sing Tao Jih Pao</i>		<i>Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>				
		1992	1998	2001	1992	1995	1992	1995	1998	2001	
Neg.	1995	-.20*	-.15*	-.21*			1992		.22*	.21*	.18*
Pos.	1995	-.10*		-.13*	2001	.18*	.16*	1995		-.14*	-.14*
Neu.	1995	.19*		.34*	1998	.12*		1995	.21*	.24*	.27*
	1998			.24*	1998	-.18*					
Bal.	1995	.11*	.13*		1998	-.18*	1992			-.18*	-.18*
	1998			-.14*							

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## 2. Topics, length, location of criticism

In both of the *Ming Pao* and the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, political coverage was significantly more than other topic categories (*Ming Pao*:  $\chi^2 = 197.611$ ,  $p < .000$ ; *Sing Tao Jih Pao*:  $\chi^2 = 188.231$ ,  $p < .000$ ). For the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, economic stories were significantly more than other topics categories ( $\chi^2 = 627.329$ ,  $p < .000$ ). One-way ANOVA showed that political coverage and economic coverage varied significantly in the four years for the *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. H8 is rejected for political topics in the *Ming Pao*, political and economics topics of the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*.

Table 3 displayed the results of one-way ANOVA of some variables and their categories. It showed that H6 is rejected for all of the three newspapers. H9 is rejected for the *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*.

**Table 3. One-way ANOVA of other variables**

	<i>Ming Pao</i>		<i>Sing Tao Jih Pao</i>		<i>Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>	
	F	df	F	Df	F	Df

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Politics	7.229**	3, 564		11.763**	3, 562
Economy	5.3**	3, 561		21.83**	3, 559
Length	29.217**	3, 572	35.11**	3, 412	17.061**
1 <sup>st</sup> (LC)	2.818*	3, 561			3, 559
2 <sup>nd</sup> (LC)				11.22**	3, 558
No Crits				2.818**	3, 561

\*\*. P<.001, \*. P<.05

Tukey post hoc tests showed that political coverage of China was significantly less in 1995 than in 1992 and 1998 for the *Ming Pao*, and significantly less in 1995 than in 1992, 1998 and 2001 for the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. Economic coverage of China increased significantly in 1995 than in 1992 for the *Ming Pao*, and was significantly more than 1992, 1998 and 2001 for the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*.

Length of coverage of China was significantly more in 2001 than in 1992, 1995 and 1998 in both of the *Ming Pao* and the *Sing Tao Jih Pao*. Length of China coverage in both 2001 and 1998 was more than in 1995. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between negativity and length for the coverage about China on the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* ( $r = .326^{**}$ ,  $p < .000$ , two-tailed).

Location of criticism varied in both of the *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. Stories that had criticism in the first half were significantly less in 1998 than in 1992 for the *Ming Pao*. For the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, stories with criticism in the second half were significantly more in 2001 and 1998 than in 1992 and 1995, respectively. Stories with no criticism were significantly more in 1998 than in 1992 and 1995, and more in 1998 than in 2001 for Hong Kong Economic Journal. Political stories were significantly less in 1995 than in 1998 and 1992 for *Ming Pao*, and were significantly less in 1995 than in 1992, 1998 and 2001 for the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. Economic news was significantly more in 1995 than in 1995 and 1998.

**Table 4. Tukey post hoc tests for length, location of criticism and topics**

	<i>The Ming Pao</i>			<i>The Sing Tao Jih Pao</i>			<i>The Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>		
	1992	1995	1998	1992	1995	1998	1992	1995	1998
<b>Length</b>	2001	.70*	.66*	.47*	2001	.96*	.98*	.68*	1995 -.57* 2001 .57*
1 <sup>st</sup> half	1998	-.08*							
2 <sup>nd</sup> half							2001 .106* 1998 .117* 1998 .147*	.129* .139* .142*	
No crits							2001		-.13*
<b>Topic</b>							2001	1.8*	
Politics	1995	-.21* -.18*					1995 -2.4*		-2.8*
Economy							2001		-.23*
							1995 .43*		.32*
<b>Promin</b>									
Above	2001	-.17* -.19*		1992		.168*	1995 .177*		.149*

\*.  $P < .05$

## Discussion

The statistical results provided a complex but revealing picture of the changes of the three newspapers coverage of China. Firstly, the results showed that the *Sing Tao Jih Pao* had least changes in its China coverage. The *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, particularly the latter, had more variations.

The *Hong Kong Economic Journal* changed most among the three papers. Negative and neutral coverage as well as political topics of China decreased in 1995 as compared to 1992, while positive and balanced coverage increased after the hand-over. Stories with criticism in the second half increased in 2001 from before the hand-over. Above-fold stories increased in 1995 than in 1992, and stories without criticism also increased in 1998 from before the hand-over. These indicators showed that the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* broadened its coverage of China and became less negative around the hand-over time. Like *Ming Pao*, length of China reporting on *Hong Kong Economic Journal* has increased but its negative coverage decreased after the hand-over of Hong Kong. We inferred that this was partly due to the fact that economic development has always been one of the top priorities for China after 1978, which is one of the most dynamic economies in the world right now.

For *Ming Pao*, editorial shift in 1995, two years before the hand-over of Hong Kong, was obvious. Its negative coverage and political topics decreased compared to 1992 while neutral and balanced coverage increased. Significant changes after the hand-over were also very visible. Stories with criticism in the first half decreased in 1998 than six years ago. There was more positive coverage in 2001 than in 1995. Above-fold China

reporting decreased in 2001 than in 1992 and 1995. However, this does not necessarily mean the paper became submissive to the Mainland Chinese government. In fact, its negative coverage was more in 1998 and 2001 than in 1995. It shows that *Ming Pao* has continued its critical coverage after 1997 as before the hand-over of Hong Kong and the Chinese government did not impose censorship on it. This point was proven in March 2002 by its reporting on the scandal about appropriating donations for drop-out students by high-profile officials of the Communist Youth League, the reserve for the Communist Party of China. Most of mainland Chinese newspapers keep self-censorship about this issue and a few bold newspapers like *South China Weekend* was punished severely. However, *Ming Pao* covered this issue intensively and caused a great impact in both Hong Kong and Mainland China. When the NPC conference was held from March 5<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002, some delegates called for an in-depth investigation over this issue.

Compared with the other two papers, the *Sing Tao Jih Pao* had the least changes. Positive coverage of China increased after the hand-over, while neutral and balanced coverage decreased. In 1995, before the hand-over of Hong Kong, above-fold China stories decreased compared to 1992. Like the two other papers, length of China reporting on *Sing Tao Jih Pao* increased significantly in 2001. As a well-known rightist newspaper, *Sing Tao Jih Pao* seemed undisturbed in its editorial policy although Hong Kong had a new communist ruler after the hand-over.

It is impossible to trace the psychological, professional, institutional or ideological dynamics behind the changes in the newspapers' coverage of China through content analysis. However, the changes immediately before the hand-over were clear.

Particularly in 1995, even the least changing *Sing Tao Jih Pao* had more positive coverage, and these changes were sound indicators that the hand-over had some effect upon the newspapers' ideological stance toward China. The papers appeared to be more pro-China in the run-up to the hand-over. However, this does not mean that they became submissive and consistently supportive of China from then on. In fact, negative coverage in the *Ming Pao* in 1998 and 2001 was significantly more than in 1995. Stories without criticism decreased in 2001 than in 1998.

The deduction is that the press probably refrained from criticizing China before 1997, but critical coverage resumed to a similar level after the hand-over of Hong Kong.

### **Limitations**

This research is not a text analysis of the changes in the three newspapers' coverage of China. Although statistical results revealed quantified trends in the papers, they cannot provide reasons as to how and why the changes occurred. If I had had more time, I should have conducted in-depth interviews with some professional journalists and editors in Hong Kong. Their first-hand working experience would provide enlightening answers about the result of our study.

In addition, after we coded all the coverage about China in the three newspapers, I should have separated the statistical results for news and those for commentary content so that we could get more meaningful results. And, if I could have more than two coders, that would increase the objectivity of the research.

## Conclusion

The content analysis of the three Hong Kong newspapers' coverage of China before and after the hand-over of Hong Kong in 1997 produced mixed but revealing messages. The *Ming Pao* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* had more variations before and after 1997, and the *Sing Tao Jih Pao* had the least variation. Significant changes were found in the papers in 1995, two years before the hand-over of Hong Kong. These papers appeared to be friendlier toward China, with either negative coverage decreasing or positive coverage increasing. The length of China reporting in all of the papers increased after the hand-over. However, the papers did not appear to become supportive of China's government after the hand-over of Hong Kong.

Results of this research show the press refrained from criticizing the Chinese government before the hand-over. Critical coverage resumed to the similar level after 1997, especially for *Ming Pao*.

Further analysis of the media text is needed to reveal the full picture of the media's attitude changes.

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### Appendix: Coding sheet

**Paper:** *Ming Pao* =1; *Sing Tao Jih Pao*=2; *Sing Pao* =3

**Time:** 1992=1; 1995=2; 1998=3; 2001=4

**Length:** Less than 1/8 of the page =1; 1/8 of the page= 2; ¼ of the page = 3; More than ¼ of the page =4

**Page Number:** Front page=1; China page/Major News=2; Other pages=3;

**Prominence:** Above-fold =1; Below-fold=2

**Favorableness:** Negative coverage refers to those reflecting conflicts, disorganization, instability and weakness. Neural coverage reports only facts without any hint of ideological stance. Positive stories were defined as those reflecting social cohesion, co-operation, stability and strength; balanced stories are those reflecting both positive and negative sides (Budd, et al, 1967; Eribo, 1993).

Negative=1; Positive=2; Neutral=3; Balanced=4

**Section :** News=1; Editorial =2; Opinion=3;

**Topic:** Politics (POLITICS) =1, including PRC domestic politics, international politic, human rights, Tibetan, Taiwan, the Hong Kong-Beijing relationship.

Economics (ECONOM)=2, including PRC domestic politics, its international economics.

Defense (DEFENSE)= 3, including military buildup, nuclear weapons, war crisis.

Science & Culture (SCICUTU)=4, including science, technology, culture, religion, sports.

Society & Law (SCOILEG)=5 including disasters, unrest, terrorism, law, crimes, population and social services/welfare/education.

**Location of criticism:** First half the story =1; Second half of the story=2; No criticism=3; (Only editorial and comment page were coded for location of criticism)

**Headline-body Interaction**

Negative headline/negative body =1

Negative headline/positive or neutral body=2

Positive or neutral headline/negative body=3

Positive or neutral headline/positive or neutral body=4

## The Possibility of Adoption of the Actual Malice Rule in Foreign Countries: From the Fourth Estate Perspective

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## **ABSTRACT**

In *New York Times v. Sullivan*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that there is a right to criticize public officials guaranteed by the First Amendment by establishing the actual malice standard. Many commentators in Australia, Canada, and England have argued that the malice standard of the United States should be applied to defamation cases in their respective countries. However, the courts in those countries have rejected adoption of the actual malice rule. This paper investigates the possibility of the application of the malice rule in those three countries where libel law is considered to be much stricter than in the United States under the Fourth Estate theory of the press.

The press in those three countries has been laying claim to a watchdog or Fourth Estate function to justify its unique and powerful role in society. The actual malice standard was fashioned to enable the press to function as a critic of the government and officials. The Fourth Estate concept emphasized the press's checking and criticizing function. Both the actual malice rule and the Fourth Estate theory are based on the belief that the checks and balances system of representative democracy requires the press to serve as a check on the abuses of governmental power.

As long as the principle of a checks-and balances system exists in representative democracies such in those three countries, the expectation that the press will serve as the Fourth Estate will continue to exist. Judicial adoption of the malice standard is needed to begin the process of legally acknowledging the press's role as the Fourth Estate.

## Introduction

In *New York Times v. Sullivan*<sup>1</sup> in 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that there is a right to criticize public officials guaranteed by the First Amendment. To adequately protect this right, the Court held that a libel defendant is not liable for any publication about a public official unless the plaintiff can show that the defendant acted with actual malice. In *Sullivan*, actual malice was defined as publishing “a defamatory falsehood with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not.”<sup>2</sup> Under the common law, defamation was a tort of a strict liability in the United States. Courts held publishers liable even when they had acted reasonably or innocently in publishing the defamatory material. *Sullivan* changed this by establishing the actual malice standard. According to Don Pember, the actual malice rule “changed the face of libel law.”<sup>3</sup>

However, the actual malice standard has been the subject of heated debate since it was adopted. Many scholars have contended that the actual malice rule has caused serious side effects on defamation law as well as on the press itself, such as high litigation costs and irresponsible reporting, and thus should be abandoned. For instance, Richard Epstein wrote: “The traditional justifications for the *New York Times* rule on absolute malice stress the need to encourage free and robust debate. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the absolute privilege will not give rise to the best kind of public debate. . . . A defendant would have to pay more for defamation under the *New York*

<sup>1</sup> 376 U.S. 254 (1964).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 280.

<sup>3</sup> Don R. Pember, *Mass Media Law* 144 (1997).

*Times* rule than he would have to pay under a common law rule of strict liability. . . .

The sensible constitutional conclusion is to abandon the actual malice rule."<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to those arguments, some authors contend the strengths of the actual malice rule more than compensate for its weaknesses. They emphasize the rule's valuable impact on defamation law as well as on the press in the United States. W. Wat Hopkins concluded: "Any changes in the law should leave the actual malice rule intact. . . . The standard has caused some procedural problems, but none that outweigh its benefits."<sup>5</sup>

Controversies over the actual malice standard have occurred outside the United States as well, in such countries as Australia, Canada, England, Israel, Argentina, South Africa, and Zambia. Many legal scholars and journalists in those countries have argued that the actual malice standard of the United States should be applied to defamation

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<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Epstein, "Was *New York Times v. Sullivan* Wrong?" 53 *U.Chi. L. Rev.* 783, 789, 818 (1986). Likewise, Judge Pierre N. Leval, who presided at the trial of General William Westmoreland's libel suit against CBS, wrote: "*Sullivan* was designed to save the press from the threat of crushing damage awards. Although the medicine has saved the patient, it has had serious side effects. . . . [The malice standard] diverts the focus of the trial to plaintiff's attack on the integrity of the press defendants." Leval, "The No-Money, No-Fault Libel Suit: Keeping *Sullivan* in Its Proper Place," 101 *Harv. L. Rev.* 1287, 1294 (1988). Clark R. Mollenhoff, a journalism professor with extensive professional experience, noted, "[The actual malice rule] has provided a significant refuge for a few willful falsifying scoundrels, for larger numbers of scoop-minded incompetents, and for many reporters and editors who are just plain lazy." Mollehoff, "25 Years of *Times v. Sullivan*," 77 *The Quill* 27, 27 (1989).

<sup>5</sup> W. Wat Hopkins, *Actual Malice: Twenty-Five Years After *Times v. Sullivan** preface, 176 (1989). Likewise, Joan Schaffner argued: "The media is exercising a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. This is the primary reason for not imposing a strict liability standard when the statement refers to a matter of political importance." Thus, She stressed the need for the actual malice standard to avoid self-censorship by the press. Schaffner, "Protection of Reputation Versus Freedom of Expression: Striking a Manageable Compromise in the Tort of Defamation," 63 *S. Cal. L. Rev.* 435, 461-62 (1990). Irving Kaufman, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, also maintained that because the main objective of the actual malice test was to protect the press from self-censorship, it needed to be retained. Kaufman, "Press Privacy and Malice: Reflections on *New York Times v. Sullivan*," 5 *Cardozo L. Rev.* 867, 874 (1984).

cases in their respective countries. However, the courts in those countries have rejected adoption of the actual malice standard.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of this study is to investigate the possibility of the application of the actual malice standard in other countries, specifically in England, Australia, and Canada, where libel law is considered to be much stricter than in the United States. This study examines whether the actual malice standard, the unique American legal mechanism for protection of freedom of the press, could be eventually introduced in those three countries under the Fourth Estate theory of the press. Controversies over the application of the actual malice rule in those three countries have generally not been approached from the Fourth Estate perspective.

The Fourth Estate concept was originally developed in Great Britain. Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1829: “[Edmund] Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all.”<sup>7</sup> As the Fourth Estate, the press’s primary function is “to question and criticize

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<sup>6</sup> Besides the United States, the Philippines, where the First Amendment was transplanted during the American period (1900-1942), adopted the actual malice rule. In *Borjal and Soliven v. Court of Appeals and Wenceslao*, the Supreme Court held that “in the present case, we deem private respondent a public figure within the purview of the *New York Times* ruling. . . . Errors or misstatements are inevitable in any scheme of truly free expression and debate. . . . To avoid the self-censorship that would necessarily accompany strict liability for erroneous statements, rules governing liability for injury to reputation are required to allow an adequate margin of error by protecting some inaccuracies. It is for the same reason that the *New York Times* doctrine requires that liability for defamation of a public official or public figure may not be imposed in the absence of proof of actual malice on the part of the person making the libelous statement. . . . The articles subject of the instant case can hardly be said to have been written with knowledge that these are false or in reckless disregard of what is false or not.” G.R. No. 126466, Jan. 14, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* 191 (1892). But Lange argued: “Apparently it was T.B. Macaulay who first referred to the reporters of Parliament as the fourth estates of the realm. . . . The statement was later attributed to Edmund Burke by Thomas Carlyle. . . . The attribution evidently was in error, since the statement itself does not appear in Burke’s writings.” David Lange, “The Speech and Press Clauses,” 23 U.C.L.A. L. Rev. 77, 90 n.79 (1975). The Estates of the realm in England were the Lords of Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Commons. Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable 383 (rev.ed. 1970).

the three official branches of government.<sup>8</sup> The unfettered ability to comment on the official conduct of public officials is central to the success of participatory democracy. In democratic political theory, the press is often presented as a watchdog of the government, which seems vital for a democratic system of government in mass society. In this context, “the Fourth Estate” is now a commonly used synonym for the press in many democratic countries.<sup>9</sup> Even though England, Australia, and Canada differ from the United States in form of government, historical experience, legal culture and legal system, they share the ideology of liberalism and a commitment to press freedom.<sup>10</sup> This paper argues that adoption of the actual malice standard would significantly enhance the ability of the press in those countries to fulfill their Fourth Estate role.

### **Research Questions and Methodology**

While scholars in England, Australia, and Canada have discussed the role of the press as the Fourth Estate and the adoption of the actual malice standard in their countries, none has used the Fourth Estate concept of the press to support the arguments concerning adoption of the malice rule. This paper tries to provide logical background for the adoption of the malice standard in those countries by studying the correlation between the actual malice standard and the Fourth Estate concept. For this purpose, the

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<sup>8</sup> Potter Stewart, “Or of the Press,” 26 *Hastings L. J.* 631, 633-34 (1975).

<sup>9</sup> For instance, American scholar Bollinger argued, “The dominant image of the press, since Sullivan, has emphasized its institutional role. This image views the press as the Fourth Estate.” Lee C. Bollinger, *Images of A Free Press* 57 (1991). Likewise, English scholar McNair wrote, “Tolerance and diversity continue to be regarded as essential for servicing a democratic political system, since such a system depends on rational choice; for allowing the media to stand as a Fourth Estate over government, thus preventing dictatorship.” Brian McNair, *News and Journalism in the UK* 30 (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Pnina Lahav, “An Outline for a General Theory of Press Law in Democracy,” in *Press Law in Modern Democracy: A Comparative Study* 339 (Pnina Lahav ed., 1985).

court cases concerning the actual malice standard -- *Derbyshire County Council v. Times Newspaper Ltd.*,<sup>11</sup> in Britain, *Hill v. Church of Scientology*<sup>12</sup> in Canada, *Theophanous v. Herald & Weekly News Ltd.*<sup>13</sup> in Australia, and *New York Times* and its progeny in the United States -- are analyzed. This paper also uses some secondary sources on the actual malice rule and the Fourth Estate theory to explain the logical relationship between them. This paper addresses the following questions:

- 1) How did the opinions of the courts in England, Australia, and Canada on the actual malice rule differ from the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion?
- 2) How are the actual malice rule and the Fourth Estate concept related?

### **The Actual Malice Rule**

This section first reviews how the actual malice rule was adopted in the United States. Then it addresses why courts in England, Canada, and Australia refused to apply the actual malice rule to their defamation cases. Third, it discusses arguments over adoption of the actual malice standard in England, Canada, and Australia.

#### ***1) The Actual Malice Rule in the United States***

*New York Times v. Sullivan* marked the beginning of a new era of freedom of the press in the coverage of public events. To a large extent, *Sullivan* and its progeny unshackled news stories from the chill of libel litigation.

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<sup>11</sup> 1 All E.R. 1011 [1993].

<sup>12</sup> 2 S.C.R. 1130 [1995], 126 D.L.R. 4<sup>th</sup> 129 (Can.).

<sup>13</sup> 182 C.L.R. 104 [1994].

*Sullivan* arose out of the civil rights movement in Montgomery, Alabama. The *Times* published a paid advertisement, signed by a number of prominent figures, which criticized police misconduct in dealing with black demonstrations. Sullivan, the Montgomery police commissioner, brought an action for libel, alleging that he was personally defamed as one of the persons responsible for the misconduct. Despite the fact Sullivan was never mentioned in the advertisement, an Alabama jury awarded him \$500,000 in damages for the libel. The Alabama Supreme Court affirmed.<sup>14</sup>

However, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed,<sup>15</sup> holding that the First Amendment requires a public official to prove that a defamatory publication was made with actual malice. Without such a rule, the Court said that "a pall of fear and timidity would be imposed upon those who would give voice to public criticism."<sup>16</sup> The Court adopted the actual malice standard because it believed that "[the First Amendment] leaves the people and the press free to criticize officials and discuss public affairs with impunity."<sup>17</sup> In its decision, the Court began by emphasizing that "debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open," and recognized that such debate "may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."<sup>18</sup> The Court noted that its previous decisions had settled the question of whether the First Amendment protected freedom of expression

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<sup>14</sup> 273 Ala. 656, 144 So. 2d 25 (1962).

<sup>15</sup> 376 U.S. at 279-80.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 269.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 298.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 270.

upon public questions<sup>19</sup> and cited prior rulings that upheld the importance of free, unrestrained, and open debate on public issues.<sup>20</sup> Then, the Court articulated the malice rule, saying that "neither factual error nor defamatory content suffices to remove the constitutional shield from criticism of official conduct" and "the combination of the two elements is no less inadequate."<sup>21</sup>

In later 1964, the Court elaborated the meaning of actual malice in *Garrison v. Louisiana*.<sup>22</sup> Brennan made it clear that actual malice in *Sullivan* was different from common law actual malice. Actual malice was defined "hatred, ill-will or enmity or a wanton desire to injure"<sup>23</sup> in the Louisiana Supreme Court decision. In *Garrison* a district attorney was convicted of criminal libel because he criticized eight judges in his parish. The Louisiana Supreme Court affirmed the conviction solely on the ground that the evidence sufficed to support the trial court's finding of ill-will, enmity, or a wanton desire to injure. The trial court also rested the conviction on additional findings that the statement was false and not made in the reasonable belief of its truth. Brennan, however, pointed out that the trial court's decision was not a holding the *Sullivan* test. He wrote:

The reasonable-belief standard applied by the trial judge is not the same as the reckless-disregard-of-truth standard. According to the trial court's opinion, a reasonable belief is one which 'an ordinary prudent man might be able to assign a just and fair reason for'; the suggestion is that under this test the immunity from criminal responsibility in the absence of ill-will disappears on proof that the exercise of ordinary care would have revealed that the statement was false. The test which we laid down in *New York Times* is not keyed to ordinary care; defeasance of the privilege is conditioned, not on mere negligence, but on reckless disregard for the truth.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 269.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 269-70.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 273.

<sup>22</sup> 379 U.S. 64 (1964).

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 78.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 79.

Brennan clearly excluded the reasonable belief or honest belief standard and the intent to harm standard, which were the core elements of common law actual malice in many states, from the newly established actual malice rule in *Sullivan*.

In *Curtis Publishing Co. v. Butts*,<sup>25</sup> the Court radically expanded the scope of the actual malice standard to cover defamation of public figures as well as public officials. In *Rosenbloom v. Metromedia*,<sup>26</sup> a plurality of the Court expanded even further the coverage of the malice rule to people involved in matters of public concern. Justice Brennan, in the plurality opinion, focused on society's interest in such matters, noting that "if a matter is a subject of public or general interest, it cannot suddenly become less so merely because a private individual is involved, or because in some sense the individual did not voluntarily choose to become involved."<sup>27</sup> The sharply divided Court ruled that the actual malice standard should be extended to matters of public or general interest, even if they involved neither public officials nor public figures.

But the Court retreated from the *Rosenbloom* position when in *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.*<sup>28</sup> it ruled that private libel plaintiffs – those who are neither public officials nor public figures – are not required to prove actual malice. Its decision identified two kinds of public figures, general-purpose public figures and limited-purpose figures, both of whom must prove actual malice in libel suits. Private figures, the Court held, must prove some level of fault, but the determination of the fault standard for private plaintiffs was left to the states. This dual fault standard has caused a lot of criticism

<sup>25</sup> 388 U.S. 130 (1967).

<sup>26</sup> 403 U.S. 29 (1971).

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 43.

<sup>28</sup> 418 U.S. 323 (1974).

insofar as it is often difficult for courts to determine who is a public figure.<sup>29</sup> Yet, despite the confusing interpretation of the public figure category, the Court has steadfastly held to the central meaning of the actual malice rule.<sup>30</sup>

**2) The actual malice rule in England, Australia, and Canada**

Responding to the British press's plea, in 1991 the Supreme Court Procedure Committee considered whether England should adopt the actual malice rule. It recognized that the malice rule "has led to a fundamental distinction between defamation law, as applied within that jurisdiction [the United States], and its English counterpart."<sup>31</sup> However, the Committee decided not to recommend the malice rule, arguing that adoption of such a rule would encourage irresponsible journalism: "Standards of care and accuracy in the press are, in our view, not such as to give any confidence that a *Sullivan* defense would be treated responsibly. It would mean, in effect, that newspapers could publish more or less what they like, provided they were honest, if their subject happened to be within the definition of a public figure. We think this would lead to great injustice. Furthermore, it would be quite contrary to the tradition of our common law that citizens are not divided into different classes."<sup>32</sup>

Two years later, in *Derbyshire County Council v. Times Newspaper Ltd.*, the House of Lords refused to adopt the actual malice rule. The issue was whether a local

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<sup>29</sup> See Erik Walker, "Public Figures – Who are They?" 45 *Baylor L. Rev.* 955 (1993).

<sup>30</sup> See *Philadelphia Newspaper, Inc. v. Hepps*, 475 U.S. 767 (1986); *Harte-Hanks Communications v. Connaughton*, 491 U.S. 657 (1989); *Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.*, 497 U.S. 1 (1990).

<sup>31</sup> Supreme Court Procedure Committee Report on Practice and Procedure in Defamation 164 (1991).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.* at 164-65.

authority had the right to maintain a suit for defamatory words pertaining to its governmental and administrative functions.<sup>33</sup> Lord Keith of Kinkel, who wrote the opinion for the House of Lords, acknowledged that public interest considerations similar to those underlying the *Sullivan* decision in the United States were involved in that it was "of the highest public importance that a democratically elected government body, or indeed any governmental body, should be open to uninhibited public criticism."<sup>34</sup> Lord Keith also recognized that the "chilling effect induced by the threat of civil actions for libel is very important. Quite often the facts which would justify a defamatory publication are known to be true, but admissible evidence capable of proving those facts is not available. This may prevent the publication of matters which it is very desirable to make public."<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, Lord Keith did not consider the actual malice rule to be appropriate and refused to incorporate it into England's defamation law.

In the Australian case *Theophanous v. The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd.*, the application of the actual malice rule was extensively discussed, but eventually the Australian High Court refused to adopt it. In this case, the defendant published a letter that allegedly defamed Dr. Andrew Theophaneous, who had been a member of the House of Representatives since 1980.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> 1 All E.R. at 1011.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 1017.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.* at 1018.

<sup>36</sup> 182 C.L.R. at 117-18. The seven-member Australian High Court was very divided in this case, issuing five separate opinions.

The High Court concluded that the malice rule did not provide adequate protection to reputation.<sup>37</sup> Chief Justice Anthony Mason, writing for a three-member plurality, first of all, pointed out that the American approach had been criticized because *Sullivan*'s progeny had extended the scope of the actual malice rule to public figures and candidates for public office, and "the *Sullivan* test tilts the balance unduly in favor of free speech against protection of individual protection."<sup>38</sup> Saying that "it has been suggested that that balance would be tilted even further away from protection of individual reputation if the test were to be applied here," Mason argued: "That is because there is a difference between our courts rules and procedures and those which prevail in the United States."<sup>39</sup> Then, Mason reasoned that "even assuming that, in conformity with *Sullivan*, the test is confined to plaintiffs who are public officials, in our view it gives inadequate protection to reputation. . . . [T]he protection of free communication does not necessitate such a subordination of the protection of individual reputation as appears to have occurred in the United States."<sup>40</sup>

In particular, Chief Justice Mason held that "if a defendant publishes false and defamatory matter about a plaintiff, the defendant should be liable in damages unless it can establish that it was unaware of the falsity, that it did not publish recklessly, and that the publication was reasonable in the sense described."<sup>41</sup> Contrary to the *Sullivan* Court, which shifted the burden of proof to the plaintiff, the *Theophanous* Court did

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at 135.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* at 136.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 137.

"not consider that the plaintiff should bear the onus of proving that the publication is not protected."<sup>42</sup> Mason stated that "reasonable" means that the publisher either took "some steps to check the accuracy of the impugned material" or established that it was otherwise justified in publishing without taking such steps or steps which were adequate."<sup>43</sup>

Pointing out differences in the legal history and culture of the United States and Australia, Justice Gerard Brennan, who wrote a separate opinion, stated: "Australia's Constitution has neither a Bill of Rights nor a First Amendment. . . . Our Founding Fathers were not attracted to a Bill of Rights though the American model was before them. . . . In this country, following the long tradition of the common law, we have accepted that personal reputation is a proper subject of protection."<sup>44</sup> According to Brennan, the purpose behind the actual malice standard is "to define the conditions in which the constitutional privilege is forfeited,"<sup>45</sup> whereas, the purpose of Australian defamation law is "to protect personal reputation to an extent appropriate in a society which also values free speech."<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Brennan concluded that the malice rule has no persuasive influence on the interpretation of the Australian Constitution.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.* This reasonableness standard is akin to the American concept of negligence, the fault requirement most states have adopted for private persons suing for libel. Negligence means a failure to act as a reasonable person would in similar circumstances. States apply the term negligence in one of two ways. Many states define negligence by an average person standard: the failure to do what a reasonably prudent person would do. Other states define negligence by a professional standard: a failure to be as careful as an ordinarily prudent person in the same occupation. Most states in the United States have held that private persons must prove negligence, or a lack of reasonable care on the part of journalists. See Kent R. Middleton, Robert Trager & Bill F. Chamberlin, *The Law of Public Communication*, 122, 125 (2001).

<sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 160-61.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.* at 161.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

Just as the High Court of Australia, the Supreme Court of Canada refused to adopt the actual malice rule and opted to retain the strict liability standard for defamation as the proper balance between reputation and freedom of expression. In *Hill v. Church of Scientology of Toronto*, the court demanded that reputation be taken seriously as fundamental to democracy.<sup>48</sup> Casey Hill was a lawyer with the Ministry of the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario. He sued the Church of Scientology and its counsel for damages from an alleged libel communicated at a press conference.

The Canadian court clearly disagreed with the decision in *Sullivan* that protecting the publication of false statements damaging to reputation was sometimes necessary to secure a robust debate on public issues. The Canadian court wrote: "First Amendment values are not at all served by circulating false statements of fact about public officials. . . . Erroneous information frustrates these values."<sup>49</sup> Thus, the court argued that the actual malice rule "countenances two evils: first, the stream of information about public officials and public affairs is polluted and often remains polluted by false information; and second, the reputation and professional life of the defeated plaintiff may be destroyed by falsehoods that might have been avoided with a reasonable effort to investigate the facts."<sup>50</sup> To support its rejection of the actual malice rule, the court said: "[The actual malice rule] has been criticized by judges and

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> 126 D.L.R. at 160.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 168.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

academic writers in the United States and elsewhere. It has not been followed in the United Kingdom or Australia.”<sup>51</sup>

In the United States, the extension of First Amendment guarantees to defamation actions and the resultant actual malice standard have afforded media defendants much greater protection against libel actions than existed under the strict liability regime. But Britain, the country from which the United States derived the basis of its legal system, lacks any legislative or constitutional protection for the press and refused to adopt the malice rule. Courts in Canada and Australia, which place more emphasis on protecting reputation than on protecting freedom of expression, also refused to apply the actual malice rule to their defamation cases.

### **3) The actual malice rule controversy in three countries**

The United States, Australia, Canada, and England have much in common. The first three were British colonies, and all share a language, history, and common law background. But there are important differences too. Although defamation law in the United States emerged from English common law roots, American law has changed drastically since *Sullivan* in 1964. In contrast, libel law in England, Australia, and Canada still follows the strict liability rule, under which libel plaintiffs must prove only identification, publication, and defamatory content.

In his comparative analysis of defamation law in the United States and England, Frederick Schauer commented: “Speech occupies a preferred position in American law, and the *New York Times* rule is an embodiment of this superior position or priority. The

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<sup>51</sup> *Id.* at 169.

virtually absolute words of the First Amendment are somewhat inconsistent with the balancing process that is at the heart of English defamation.”<sup>52</sup> His analysis demonstrates that because British law does not offer the same protections for expression afforded under American law, it would be difficult to introduce the actual malice standard to the English legal system.

But Michael Supperstone observed that “there is continuing support from the press and some academics” in England for the actual malice rule.<sup>53</sup> Through a comparative empirical approach, Russell Weaver, an American legal scholar, and Geoffrey Bennett, an English scholar, argued that the actual malice standard should be adopted in England. At the outset they conceded: “The British experience seems to indicate that an actual malice standard may not be necessary to a free press. Indeed, British experience might suggest that, even without such a standard, the press can be fairly robust and aggressive.”<sup>54</sup>

However, Weaver and Bennett contended, through their extensive interviews with newspaper reporters, editors, and defamation lawyers in both the United States and Britain, that the absence of the actual malice standard has negatively influenced the press in Britain. The two scholars concluded: “By contrast to the U.S. media, the British media is far more timid. British reporting seems to be chilled by prevailing defamation laws, and the British press does not appear to be as free and robust as the U.S. press.”<sup>55</sup> Their study proved how important and effective a legal mechanism the actual malice

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<sup>52</sup> Frederick Schauer, “Social Foundations of the Law of Defamation: A comparative analysis,” 1 *J. Media L. & Prac.* 3, 13 (1980).

<sup>53</sup> Michael Supperstone, “Press Law in the United Kingdom,” in Lahav, *supra* note 10, at 39.

<sup>54</sup> Russell L. Weaver and Geoffrey Bennett, “Is The New York Times ‘Actual Malice’ Standard Really Necessary? A Comparative Perspective,” 52 *La. L. Rev.* 1153, 1169 (1993).

<sup>55</sup> *Id.* at 1189.

standard has been for freedom of the press in America. Arguing that “many commentators, both in the United States and abroad, have long been calling for English libel reform,” Sarah Obaditch Kambour urged the House of Lords in England to adopt “wholeheartedly the actual malice standard of *Sullivan*.<sup>56</sup>

Canadian and American scholars have also discussed whether Canada should adopt the American malice rule. David Lepofsky of Canada argued that Canada should not adopt the actual malice rule because “it is unclear whether there remains any meaningful line under the U.S. approach which circumscribes or limits the range of appropriate journalist reporting.”<sup>57</sup> Canadian Charles Tingly was also negative toward the prospect of adoption of the malice rule, pointing out the differences between Canada and the United States concerning the press’s institutional role, the formative national crises, and the methods of constitutional judicial review. He contended: “The *New York Times* rule has not been, and is unlikely to be, adopted in Canada because the Canadian press does not enjoy the same institutional status as government watchdog that the U.S. media possess, nor has Canada undergone a civil rights crisis. . . . Canadian courts recognize a more limited conception of state action than their American counterparts.”<sup>58</sup> In particular, Tingly contended that “the press in Canada has not been elevated to the status of Fourth Estate.”<sup>59</sup> But Tingly did not detail the historical and theoretical

<sup>56</sup> Sarah Obaditch Kambour, “Constitutional Law – First Amendment Jurisprudence in Great Britain,” 24 *Seton Hall L. Rev.* 1549, 1577 (1994).

<sup>57</sup> M. David Leopofsky, “Making Sense of the Libel Chill Debate: Do Libel Laws Chill the Exercise of Freedom of Expression?” 4 *Nat'l J. Const. L.* 169, 204 (1994).

<sup>58</sup> Charles Tingley, “Reputation, Freedom of Expression and the Tort of Defamation in the United States and Canada: A Deceptive Polarity,” 37 *Alberta L. Rev.* 620, 623 (1999).

<sup>59</sup> *Id.* at 634.

underpinnings of the term Fourth Estate nor discuss the institutional role of the press in terms of the Fourth Estate theory.

In contrast, Canadian lawyer Richard G. Dearden insisted: "The ancient common law presumptions of falsity, malice and damages which pre-date the Star Chamber should not survive *Charter* scrutiny today. Now that Canada has constitutionally entrenched freedom of the press, protections must be given to libel defendants in actions by public officials as was done by the United States Supreme Court in *Sullivan* through the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America."<sup>60</sup> Similarly, American legal scholar Rodney Smolla argued that Canada should consider adopting the American legal standard. He urged that Canada should abandon the English common law: "The common law of England was almost paternalistic in its protection of thin skin. The English common law grew out of a pre-democratic political society, a society divided into social classes and severely mindful of propriety and place. Canada's modern society, by contrast, is democratic and egalitarian. There is no social caste to be enforced in Canada."<sup>61</sup> Consequently, "Canada may rightfully accept the wisdom of the common law that reputation deserves legal protection, but it should temper that wisdom with balanced rules that require a certain toughening of the mental hide as part of the price of an open society," Smolla wrote.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Richard G. Dearden, "Constitutional Protection for Defamatory Words Published About the Conduct of Public Officials," in *Freedom of Expression and the Charter* 313, 314 (David Schneiderman ed., 1991).

<sup>61</sup> Rodney A. Smolla, "Balancing Freedom of Expression and Protection of Reputation Under the Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*," in *Freedom of Expression and the Charter* at 281-82.

<sup>62</sup> *Id.* at 282.

Adoption of the actual malice rule in Australia has also been extensively debated. According to Russell Weaver, the American scholar who also studied British law, and Kathe Boehringer, an Australian legal scholar, much of the commentary has been critical of the actual malice standard. For instance, in 1993 the New South Wales Law Reform Commission issued a discussion paper on the rule. The Commission stated: "Although the public figure test is often touted by free speech advocates as an effective and progressive mechanism for ensuring vigorous debate in a democratic society, the reality of American law suggests that this is not so clear-cut. . . . A quarter-century of litigation since *New York Times* has led to the ironic situation where the law of libel protects neither the press nor the individual. Libel has become a lose-lose proposition."<sup>63</sup>

While discussing *Sullivan* in Canada and Australia, English scholar Leonard Leigh contended that the High Court of Australia shared "the same reservations as the Supreme Court of Canada."<sup>64</sup> Then, he concluded: "[A] British reflection. It seems unlikely that *Sullivan* would be followed by the courts" in Canada and Australia.<sup>65</sup>

However, when the Australian High Court in *Theophanous* rejected the actual malice rule, Michael Grimsley strongly attacked the decision, saying it left "publishers subject to many of the evils that the actual malice standard of *New York Times* was designed to protect against."<sup>66</sup> Grimsley seemed to urge the High Court in Australia to

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<sup>63</sup> Discussion Paper # 32: Defamation, New South Wales Law Reform Commission 182 (1993). Quoted in Russell Weaver and Kathe Boehringer, "Implied Rights And The Australian Constitution: A Modified *New York Times v. Sullivan* Goes Down Under," 8 *Seton Hall Const. L.J.* 459, 473 (1998).

<sup>64</sup> Leonard Leigh, "Of Free Speech and Individual Reputation: *New York Times v. Sullivan* in Canada and Australia," in *Importing The First Amendment: Freedom of Speech and Expression in Britain, Europe and the USA* 64 (Ian Loveland ed., 1998).

<sup>65</sup> *Id.* at 66.

adopt the actual malice rule regardless of the limits of constitutional jurisprudence in Australia. He wrote: "Justice Brennan of the High Court also stated reasons for not adopting the *New York Times* standard in Australia. Justice Gerard Brennan pointed out that there is no express provision for freedom of speech in the Australia Constitution. While this is true, a lack of constitutional protections has not prevented courts from creating or inferring such protections. One example is the implied right to privacy announced by the U.S. Supreme Court."<sup>67</sup> Grimsley asserted: "Although the actual malice standard, and the decision as a whole, has been criticized and examined for many years, it has stood as good law until the present with very little refinement. . . . The actual malice standard set forth in *Times* was a sound decision. It was a good law then and remains the standard today, more than thirty years later."<sup>68</sup>

In sum, controversies over the actual malice rule have continually occurred in those three countries, regardless of the differences or similarities of legal tradition and legal system between each country and the United States. Even though they acknowledged that there are differences in defamation law and constitutional jurisprudence between their countries and the United States, many commentators in countries discussed above have observed the value of the actual malice rule and have argued that it should be adopted to improve freedom of the press in their respective countries.

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<sup>66</sup> Michael S. Grimsley, "Defamation of Public Figures: Is *New York Times* Outdated?" 10 *Fla. J. Int'l. L.* 293, 312 (1995).

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 310.

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* at 300, 313.

### The Press as the Fourth Estate

The concept of the press as a Fourth Estate, “a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law making,”<sup>69</sup> was originally developed in Britain during the nineteenth century when the British press tried to establish itself as “an indispensable link between public opinion and the governing institutions of the country.”<sup>70</sup> At the time, many English philosophers argued that the free expression of public opinion was the chief safeguard against misrule by the government, and for this reason, the press should suffer hardly any restriction on its freedom to comment and to criticize.<sup>71</sup> Among advocates of the Fourth Estate concept were Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill.<sup>72</sup>

However, many commentators have pointed out that Great Britain has traditionally censored its press despite its reputation as the birthplace of freedom of expression and the Fourth Estate concept. Boyce considered the Fourth Estate theory a “mythical view” in Britain. He observed, “It was an undeniable fact that the press, or at least a large section of it, was by no means free from the influence of the other estates.”<sup>73</sup> In his view, the only time that the press successfully functioned as the Fourth Estate was during World War I. Piers Brendon argued: “The British press, lacking the constitutional defenses that would enable and encourage it to assert its independence, still panders to the practice of official reticence. . . . Constrained by a tradition of

<sup>69</sup> Carlyle, *supra* note 7, at 164.

<sup>70</sup> George Boyce, “The Fourth Estate: the reappraisal of a concept,” in *Newspaper History From The Seventeenth Century To The Present Day* 21 (Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate ed., 1978).

<sup>71</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>72</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>73</sup> *Id.* at 26.

subservience and habits of self-censorship, most journalists do not take their role as part of the fourth estate seriously.”<sup>74</sup> In her comparative study of relations between government and the press in Britain and American, Deborah Holmes asserted: “In the United Kingdom, the watchdog function of the press is minimal, with newspapers playing a subdued role in keeping government responsible. . . . Not regarding the press as its equal either in might or in importance, the British state is disinclined to enlist journalists’ cooperation in handling sensitive material.”<sup>75</sup>

Several writers have emphasized the need for legal reform to enable the British press to operate as a Fourth Estate. Juliana Koranteng lamented the absence of constitutional protection for the press, adding that “the British press is also held in check by libel laws that are among the most restrictive in the world.”<sup>76</sup> In his book *Fourth-Rate Estate*, Tom Basitow harshly criticized the press environment in Britain. He described “the legend of the Fourth Estate” as one of “the stale traditional myths that mask the somber realities” in Britain.<sup>77</sup> Saying that “the British press is hedged in by a thicket of legal constraints,”<sup>78</sup> Basitow argued, “If the national press is ever to become mature enough to fulfill its proper role as watchdog, critic of authority. . . a sweeping

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<sup>74</sup> Piers Brendon, “Amendment envy,” 30 *Columbia Journalism Review* 68, 69 (November-December, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> Deborah Holmes, *Governing The Press: Media Freedom in the U.S. and Great Britain* 10, 16 (1986).

<sup>76</sup> Juliana Koranteng, “No news, please, we’re British,” 15 *American Journalism Review* 29, 33 (1993).

<sup>77</sup> Tom Basitow, *Fourth-Rate Estate: An Anatomy of Fleet Street* 1 (1985).

<sup>78</sup> *Id.* at 100.

radical change in our archaic and repressive laws will be as essential as the modernization of the technical processes of communications.”<sup>79</sup>

In Australia, where the Constitution does not include a formal guarantee of freedom of expression, the function of the press as the Fourth Estate has been subject to continuing legal and journalistic debate. David Flint, a legal scholar and long-time chairman of the Australian Press Council, has continually argued for a referendum to constitutionally guarantee the press the ability to act as the Fourth Estate. He wrote:

It is also a mistake to suppose that the [U.S.] constitutional guarantee was to merely ensure the press would be a neutral forum for debate, a marketplace for ideas, a kind of Hyde Park for the community. . . . The primary purpose of the constitutional guarantee of a free press was a similar one: to create a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check and balance on the three official branches. . . . Now as we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the great step forward in the US Constitution of guaranteeing freedom of speech and of the press could become a significant check and balance in our Constitution.<sup>80</sup>

In her extensive study of Australian journalism from the Fourth Estate perspective, Julianne Schultz claimed that even though the reality has been impaired by political interests and the increasing concentration of media ownership, the Fourth Estate remains the ideal of most journalists. According to Schultz, in a 1992 survey of 247 news journalists and 39 leading investigative reporters and editors in Australia, 79 percent of the news journalists and 87.5 percent of the investigative journalists favored the idea of the media as the Fourth Estate.<sup>81</sup> After discussing the attitudes of the judiciary, executive, and Parliament towards the press as the Fourth Estate, Schultz concluded: “Despite international treaties protecting freedom of speech and the press,

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<sup>79</sup> *Id.* at 103.

<sup>80</sup> David Flint, “Press provides vital watchdog,” *Australian* 11 (20 February, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> Julianne Schultz, *Reviving The Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media* 50-51 (1998).

and liberal interpretations of the Constitution by the High Court, the news media is not formally recognized as the Fourth Estate in Australia. Custom and practice have, however, accorded it this role.”<sup>82</sup>

Canada’s constitutional provision on freedom of the press is not as strong as the American version, nor does it have a similar legal orientation.<sup>83</sup> However, the adoption in 1982 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms contributed to a legally favorable environment for the press. Section 2(b) of the Charter states: “Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” According to Tingly, with the advent of the Charter, commentators have declared that a constitutional protection for defamatory material, which is similar to the actual malice rule of the United States, is conceivable in Canada.<sup>84</sup> But the press in Canada has not been considered as the Fourth Estate by courts.

Arthur Siegel noted that the mass media are variously referred to as the Fourth Estate in only idealistic terms.<sup>85</sup> While arguing that secrecy undermines the watchdog role of the media, Siegel pointed out that in Canada constitutional factors, the nature of Canadian federalism, the practice of elite accommodation in the political process, and the tradition of individual privacy have supported secrecy in government, which is more

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<sup>82</sup> *Id.* at 93.

<sup>83</sup> Arthur Siegel, *Politics and The Media in Canada* 235 (1983).

<sup>84</sup> Tingly, *supra* note 58, at 622.

<sup>85</sup> Arthur Siegel, *Politics and The Media in Canada* 19 (2d ed.1996).

severe than in Britain.<sup>86</sup> He expressed his conviction that because of the secretive nature of the Canadian government, the press in Canada cannot play a role as the Fourth Estate.

However, constitutional scholar Peter Hogg strongly supported the press's role as the Fourth Estate. He observed, "The most powerful rationale for the constitutional protection for the freedom of expression is its role as an instrument of democratic government."<sup>87</sup> This principle is grounded in the belief that a dynamic press, serving as the Fourth Estate, is a barrier against tyrannical government.

In the United States, Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart advocated a preferred position for "the organized press – of the daily newspapers and other established news media,"<sup>88</sup> emphasizing the press's role as the Fourth Estate in the framework of the Constitution. At the outset of his address at Yale University, Stewart pointed out, "Surprisingly, despite the importance of newspapers in the political and social life of our country, the Supreme Court has not until very recently been called upon to delineate their constitutional role in our structure of government."<sup>89</sup> Stewart believed the framers of the Constitution had intended to assure the autonomy of the press. He continued:

The Free Press clause extends protection to an institution. . . . The primary purpose of the constitutional guarantee of a free press was. . . to create a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check on the three official branches. . . . The relevant metaphor, I think, is the metaphor of the Fourth Estate.<sup>90</sup>

While adopting Justice Stewart's theory, David Onorato insisted: "Any technique allowing the government to interfere with the press's investigative and

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<sup>86</sup> *Id.* at 29, 42.

<sup>87</sup> Peter Hogg, *Constitutional Law of Canada* 40 (3d ed. 1992).

<sup>88</sup> Stewart, *supra* note 8, at 631.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 631-32.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.* at 633, 634.

reporting activities threatens the independence of the press. . . . After all the very function of the press is to criticize the government.<sup>91</sup> Likewise, Stewart's theory for recognizing a special constitutional press position was supported by an observation of Leonard Levy. He contended that because of its special relationship to popular government as the Fourth Estate, the press enjoyed a preferred position in the constitutional scheme.<sup>92</sup> Levy explained the Fourth Estate function of the press in terms of checks-and-balances: "The press as a check on government serves as an informal or extraconstitutional fourth branch that functions as part of the checks-and-balances system which can expose public mismanagement and keep power accountable."<sup>93</sup>

However, some commentators have challenged the press's adversarial role based on the Fourth Estate. John Merrill contended that the press may at times perform the function of a check on government abuses, "but the concept of the whole press as being a fourth branch of government is no more than a fine-sounding myth."<sup>94</sup> While insisting that "the press is not a separate estate in the American system,"<sup>95</sup> Anthony Lewis rather emphasized the side effect of the Fourth Estate theory on the press. He wrote: "Justice Stewart's idea of a preferred constitutional position for the organized press was inevitably appealing to journalists, but it would hurt their real interests if it became

<sup>91</sup> David Joseph Onorato, "A Press Privilege for the Worst of Times," 75 *Geo. L.J.* 361, 384-85 (1986).

<sup>92</sup> Leonard W. Levy, *Original Intent and the Framers Constitution* 213 (1988).

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

<sup>94</sup> John C. Merrill, *The Imperative of Freedom: A Philosophy of Journalistic Autonomy* 117 (1974).

<sup>95</sup> Anthony Lewis, "A Preferred Position For Journalism?" *Hofstra L. R.* 7 595, 626(1979).

accepted doctrine. It would separate the professional press from the public it represents and increase the risk of arrogance.”<sup>96</sup>

But Judge James Oakes firmly supported the Fourth Estate function of the press. He said: “Justice Stewart’s emphasis on the functional aspects of the press, particularly its role as a Fourth Estate, is nonetheless valuable. The real contribution of the Justice’s thesis is to demonstrate the principle role that the checking function plays in first amendment theory and the system of free expression generally.”<sup>97</sup> Arguing that “the Stewart theory has a number of important characteristics,”<sup>98</sup> Randall Bezanson stressed that in order to secure the press’s checking function as the Fourth Estate, the Constitution mandates that the press not to be regulated by or be dependent on government.<sup>99</sup>

In summary, despite some criticism, the Fourth Estate functions of monitoring government and protecting against governmental abuses have been recognized by many commentators as the primary role of the press in the United States. While the concept has been challenged by some commentators, “the Fourth Estate” is currently a commonly used synonym for the press in the United States as well as in many democratic countries. In spite of the lack of a written constitution in England and a strong constitutional guarantee of freedom of press in Australia and Canada, the press in those countries has been laying claim to a watchdog or Fourth Estate function to justify its unique and powerful role in society.

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<sup>96</sup> *Id.*

<sup>97</sup> James L. Oakes, “Proof of Actual Malice in Defamation Actions: An Unsolved Dilemma,” 7 *Hofstra L. Rev.* 655, 675 (1979).

<sup>98</sup> Randall P. Bezanson, “The New Free Press Guarantee,” 63 *Va. L. Rev.* 731, 753 (1977).

<sup>99</sup> *Id.* at 753.

### The actual malice rule and Fourth Estate Theory

The press is among the few institutions in modern democratic society that can regularly challenge the government. Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilber Schramm, who identified four theories of the press,<sup>100</sup> argued, "In Libertarian theory, the press is not an instrument of government."<sup>101</sup> According to their libertarian theory, one of the chief purposes of the press is to check on government. In that context, Siebert et al. characterized journalism in Britain and the United States as a Fourth Estate: "For two hundred years the United States and Great Britain have maintained this kind of press, almost wholly free of government influence and encouraged to serve as a 'Fourth Estate' in the governing process."<sup>102</sup>

Contrary to the libertarian arguments, the press in Britain has rarely been recognized as the Fourth Estate, as discussed above. Yet, the dominant image of American journalism, according to Lee Bollinger, became the Fourth Estate, with the press performing a critical, quasi-official function in the political system since *Sullivan* in 1964.<sup>103</sup> Although he objected to characterization of the press as the Fourth Estate, Bollinger acknowledged that *Sullivan* rendered to the press an institutional role as critic of the government.

The Founding Fathers of the United States inserted the free press clause of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights to protect the press in its role as critic of

<sup>100</sup> Their four theories of mass media are the authoritarian theory, the libertarian theory, the social responsibility theory, and the soviet-totalitarian theory. See Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilber Schramm, *Four Theories of The Press* (1956).

<sup>101</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>102</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>103</sup> Lee C. Bollinger, *Images of A Free Press* 57 (1991).

government and government officials. The Founding Fathers knew that the unfettered ability to comment on the official conduct of public officials was central to the success of the new participatory democracy they were establishing. Saying that “freedom of the press occupied a secure place in the framers’ catalogue of essential rights,”<sup>104</sup> David Anderson argued that the framers viewed freedom of the press “not merely as a desirable civil liberty, but as a matter integral to the structure of the new government.”<sup>105</sup> Justice Brennan in *Sullivan* wrote: “Of the exercise of that power by the press, [Madison’s] Report said: ‘In every state, probably, in the Union, the press has exerted a freedom in canvassing the merits and measures of public men, of every description, which has not been confined to the strict limits of the common law. On this footing the freedom of the press has stood.’ . . . The right of free public discussion of the stewardship of public officials was thus, in Madison’s view, a fundamental principle of the American form of government.”<sup>106</sup>

In *Sullivan* the Court recognized the possibility that “uninhibited, robust, and wide open” debate on public issues would be threatened and the press would be deterred in its role as government critic by the Alabama judgment and others like it. Justice Brennan expressed concern about this situation. He wrote, “The fear of damage awards under a rule such as that invoked by the Alabama courts here may be markedly more inhibiting than fear of prosecution under a criminal statute.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, Brennan and the Court created “a federal rule that prohibits a public official from recovering damages for

<sup>104</sup> David A. Anderson, “The Origins of the Press Clause,” 30 *UCLA L. Rev.* 455, 487 (1983).

<sup>105</sup> *Id.* at 488.

<sup>106</sup> 376 U.S. at 275.

<sup>107</sup> *Id.* at 277.

a defamatory falsehood relating to his official conduct unless he proves that the statement was made with actual malice – that is, with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not.”<sup>108</sup> The most important rationale behind the actual malice rule was that a democratic society needs criticism of public officials’ public acts to survive.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the importance of “citizen-critics” serving as a check on government abuse was the prime justification the Court used to create the actual malice rule.<sup>110</sup> Justice Brennan further explained the concept of the malice rule in *Rosenblatt v. Baer*.<sup>111</sup> He wrote: “Criticism of government is at the very center of the constitutionally protected area of free discussion. Criticism of those responsible for government operations must be free, lest criticism of government itself be penalized.”<sup>112</sup>

A First Amendment scholar, Robert Wagman, analyzed the set of assumptions on which the actual malice rule was based. In his analysis, Wagman did not explicitly use the term Fourth Estate, but he seemed to argue that the actual malice rule was created to secure the press’s role as the Fourth Estate, established to criticize the government. He wrote: “What Brennan and the Court fashioned was a difficult test that would have to be met by a public official before he or she could collect in a libel action. It was the Court’s hope that by changing the ground rules in setting such a difficult standard, such suits by government officials in the future would be discouraged except

<sup>108</sup> *Id.* at 279-80.

<sup>109</sup> *Id.* at 272.

<sup>110</sup> *Id.* at 282.

<sup>111</sup> 383 U.S. 75 (1966).

<sup>112</sup> *Id.* at 85.

in the most egregious cases. This would allow the media to function as the Founding Fathers intended with respect to robust criticism on public matters.”<sup>113</sup>

The Fourth Estate concept, at its most basic, holds that the role of the press is to act as a check on powerful government on behalf of the public by criticizing government’s actions. Justice Stewart, who had concurred in *Sullivan*, later argued that the Constitution recognizes the press as a Fourth Estate, whose primary function is to check the three official branches of government, not to inform the public as a neutral conduit.<sup>114</sup> According to Stewart, “[T]he press meant organized, expert scrutiny of government.”<sup>115</sup> The press’s checking function on official power was “what the American Founders decided to risk.”<sup>116</sup> Although the term Fourth Estate may have been unknown to the Founders when they drafted the First Amendment, it can be argued that they were trying to provide for its functional equivalent.

To bolster the press’s checking function as the Fourth Estate, Stewart contended that the press was a constitutionally protected business. “The publishing business is, in short, the only organized private business that is given explicit constitutional protection,” he said.<sup>117</sup>

Stewart’s perception of the Fourth Estate appears to be what Vincent Blasi meant by his checking value theory. Blasi wrote: “Free speech, a free press, and free assembly can serve in checking the abuse of power by public officials. . . . [T]he

<sup>113</sup> Robert J. Wagman, *The First Amendment Book* 151-12 (1991).

<sup>114</sup> Stewart, *supra* note 8, at 634.

<sup>115</sup> *Id.*

<sup>116</sup> *Id.*

<sup>117</sup> *Id.* at 633.

exercise of power by public officials needs to be more intensively scrutinized and publicized.”<sup>118</sup> His argument that the principal First Amendment value of the press is its capacity to detect and reveal government abuse of power, not its ability to facilitate an active democratic exchange among citizens, supports the traditional Fourth Estate image of the press.

In particular, Blasi analyzed the actual malice standard from the perspective of the checking value theory. He wrote: “[R]espect for the checking value leads one to regard speech about the official actions of public officials as more important than any other kind of communication. Thus, the Supreme Court’s original decision in *Sullivan* to extend the extraordinary protection of the reckless-disregard standard only to this category of speech makes sense in terms of the checking value.”<sup>119</sup>

In summary, the actual malice standard was fashioned to enable the press to function as a critic of the government and officials. The Fourth Estate concept emphasizes the press’s checking and criticizing function. Both the actual malice rule and the Fourth Estate theory are based on the belief that the checks-and-balances system of representative democracy requires the press to serve as a check on the abuses of governmental power.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Julianne Schultz, an Australian scholar, contended that the eighteenth-century claim of the press as the Fourth Estate became an ideal that continued to influence the

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<sup>118</sup> Vincent Blasi, “The Checking Value in First Amendment Theory,” 3 *Am. B. Found. Res. J.* 521, 527, 541(1977).

<sup>119</sup> *Id.* at 581.

attitudes of journalists, as well as politicians and citizens, in the late twentieth-century.<sup>120</sup> Contrary to in the United States, the ideal has not received any legal support and has not been recognized by courts in Britain, Australia, and Canada.

Britain has neither a constitution nor an explicit commitment to press freedom engraved on a basic charter. English courts have continued to impose restrictions on expression and the press.<sup>121</sup> The Australian Constitution does not include formal guarantees of freedom of expression or definitions of the political role of the news media.<sup>122</sup> The Canadian Constitution did not provide explicit protection for freedom of expression prior to the passage of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.<sup>123</sup> The Charter guarantees several civil liberties including freedom of the press, most of which obtained constitutional status for the first time in 1982.<sup>124</sup> However, “the free press principle is moderated in Canada because of strong recognition for other competing values.”<sup>125</sup> The interests of the courts, the government, and Parliament, and the reputation of members of the public may take precedence over the interests of a free press.<sup>126</sup> Thus, the press has not been considered the Fourth Estate in terms of legal framework in any of the three countries.

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<sup>120</sup> Schultz, *supra* note 81, at 15.

<sup>121</sup> Anthony Lester, “The Overseas Trade in the American Bill of Rights,” 88 *Colum. L. Rev.* 537, 552 (1988).

<sup>122</sup> Schultz, *supra* note 81, at 72.

<sup>123</sup> M.J. Bryant, “Section 2(b) and Libel Law: Defamatory Statements About Public Officials,” 2 *Media & Communic. L. Rev.* 335, 343 (1991-92).

<sup>124</sup> R.I. Cheffins and P. Johnson, *The Revised Canadian Constitution* 130-31 (1986).

<sup>125</sup> Siegel, *supra* note 85, at 41.

<sup>126</sup> *Id.* at 58.

Yet, in representative democratic countries such as Britain, Australia, and Canada, the public expects the press to check and criticize the government and officials. As the literature review demonstrated, although the press has not been acknowledged as the Fourth Estate within the legal framework of the three countries, it has been urged to play this role, revealing abuses of state authority and defending the democratic rights of citizens.

In practice, the press in those countries has been influenced by the Fourth Estate ethos and does not confine itself to the politically neutral roles of information provider and conduit for public opinion. The press has asserted a right to engage in active criticism of the government. According to the Royal Commission on Newspapers of Canada, every journalist remains deeply attached to the image of righter of wrongs, watchdog over political integrity.<sup>127</sup> In Australia, the relationship between the press as the Fourth Estate and the judiciary, executive, and Parliament continues to be a matter for negotiation.<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, the courts in those three countries have recognized the importance of criticism of the government and officials as an essential element of representative democracy. In *Derbyshire County Council*, the British House of Lords stressed that in a democratic society, individuals must be free to criticize their government openly, a principle long recognized in the United States. Citing statements in *City of Chicago v. Tribune Co.*,<sup>129</sup> that “every citizen has a right to criticize an inefficient or corrupt

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<sup>127</sup> Royal Commission on Newspapers 30 (1981).

<sup>128</sup> Schultz, *supra* note 81, at 93.

<sup>129</sup> 307 Ill. 595 (1923).

government without fear of civil as well as criminal prosecution,"<sup>130</sup> Lord Keith wrote:

"These propositions were endorsed by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Sullivan*. While these decisions were related most directly to the provisions of the American Constitution concerned with securing freedom of the speech, the public interest considerations which underlaid them are no less valid in this country."<sup>131</sup>

The majority of the High Court in the Australian case *Theophanous* also recognized that the government cannot be exempt from open criticism. The Justices wrote, "Because the system of representative government depends for its efficacy on the free flow of information and ideas and of debate, the freedom extends to all those who participate in political discussion."<sup>132</sup>

In *Hill*, the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged the importance of citizens' criticism of representative government. It stated: "In a country like ours, where the people purport to be able to govern themselves through their elected representatives, adequate information about their government is of transcendent importance. . . .

Criticism and assessment of the performance of public officials and of government are not subject to penalties imposed by law."<sup>133</sup>

Although the courts in these cases rejected the actual malice standard, which in the United States has afforded the press much greater protection, and demanded that the value of individual reputation be taken seriously as fundamental to democracy, they did not disregard the value of the unfettered ability to comment on the official conduct of

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<sup>130</sup> *Id.* at 607.

<sup>131</sup> 1 All E. R. at 1018.

<sup>132</sup> 182 C.L.R. at 122.

<sup>133</sup> *Id.* at 168.

public officials in representative democracy. It also can be argued that even though they did not apply the actual malice rule to their defamation cases, the courts in England, Australia, and Canada agreed with an assumption on which the actual malice rule is based – that the press must be allowed to function as government critic for uninhibited, robust, and wide open debate on public issues to occur.

The press is the necessary representative of the public interests.<sup>134</sup> As observed earlier, it has long been discussed in the United States as well as in those three countries that the unfettered ability to criticize the government is executed by the press on behalf of the public, and an unfettered press can be achieved when it functions as the Fourth Estate. Because the courts remained silent with respect to the press's role as the Fourth Estate in terms of legal framework, the press in England, Australia, and Canada has survived for two centuries as the Fourth Estate only in terms of custom and practice. Therefore, journalists in those countries have advocated legal reform, providing the press with greater protection.<sup>135</sup>

As long as the principle of a checks-and-balances system exists in representative democracies such as Britain, Australia, and Canada, the expectation that the press will serve as an unfettered critic of the government, as the Fourth Estate, will continue to exist. But public and journalistic expectations are not sufficient to ensure that the critical political function of the press in a democracy remains unfettered. Legal recognition of that function is needed. Judicial adoption of the actual malice standard is

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<sup>134</sup> *Saxbe v. Washington Post*, 417 U.S. 843, 850 (1974).

<sup>135</sup> For instance, the British press has called on British officials to adopt the actual malice rule. See Weaver and Bennett, *supra* note 54, at 1162-1163. Canadian journalists also strongly argued that the malice rule should be adopted in their country. See Mark Fitzgerald, "Canadian Publishers Want More Press Freedom: Yearn for some of the press guarantees offered in the U.S.," *Editor & Publisher* 28 (April 29, 1989).

needed to begin the process of legally acknowledging the press's role as the Fourth Estate.

***Glocalizing a Dam Conflict:  
Thai Rath, Matichon and Pak Mun Dam***

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## Introduction

The term *globalization* generally refers to the current social transformation of the global communities in which advanced communication technologies virtually condense spatial distances, leading to the rising awareness among the global population that any actions or decisions made elsewhere can affect their locales. While *globalization* has been used in such an overarching context, the term *glocalization* emerges to capture a narrower sense of the global changes by underscoring the processes in which ongoing dynamic interactions among local, national, and global participants have taken place. To me, the notion of *glocalization* is useful to circumscribe the current phenomenon of new social grassroots movements that actively engage local and global actors.

The growing global-local coalitions in the environmental movement in response to the pressure of international political and economic expansions can be understood from this *glocalization* perspective. In addition, media institutions in most parts of the world have greater access to advanced communication and information technology than most of their audiences. For this reason, I believe that local media become a *glocal* conjuncture that can create local awareness about a global environmental issue. In other words, when placing local media institutions into the center of the *glocalization* process, we can see that to a certain extent the media work to localize global issues and globalize local issues. This research is also based on a supposition that Thai media institutions, through their meanings-making process, can broaden their audience's knowledge of global environmental problems. In this research, an environmental conflict over a World Bank-funded dam project in Northeast Thailand is used as a backdrop to explore this assumption.

Through comparative critical discourse analysis of news stories that appeared in two Thai-language daily newspapers — *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* — the research addresses several questions. First, the research examines the level of attention each paper gave to the Pak Mun Dam conflict. Second, the research investigates the newspapers' dependency on three different news sources: government authorities, environmentalists, and local villagers. For this, the

research seeks to identify the voice(s) each paper largely reflected. Third, by using framing analysis of news coverage, the research explicates how the Thai press constructed the meanings of the conflict. Last, the research explores the assumption that the local media work as a linkage between the local and the global.

## Conceptual framework

The *glocalization* concept emerges from the belief that there is an insufficient explanation that leads us to an understanding of the process of globalization. In general, globalization refers to the contemporary phase of development and transformation in human societies influenced by economic growth and advanced communication technology. Most scholars across disciplines agree that the globalization process is complex, producing multiple effects, and there are many layers of factors that shape its direction.

Globalization has a contradictory nature. It has both positive and negative attributes. The major benefits of globalization are seen in the increase of productivity, technological advances, higher standards of living, more diffusion of knowledge and information, reductions in poverty in some parts of the world, and increased public awareness in human rights and cultural diversity. On the other hand, globalization gives way to more political economic control by the world's hegemonies in developed nations and some transnational companies (TNCs) over the least powerful and poorest areas of the world. Globalization has brought about global environmental degradation, and often human rights violations. In response to the preponderance of global elements, nation-states have attempted to gain back some political and economic ground, resulting in the rise of new nationalism and regionalism and national communication policies to deal with the globalization.

Critics of globalization discourse argue that the globalization process is often viewed from a top-down perspective. Most globalization advocates and opponents exaggerate the role of globalizers such as transnational companies and international institutions in transforming the global society. Many globalization observers overlook the influences of local actors, state agencies, and grassroots social movements in affecting the globalization process. In this sense, the *glocalization* perspective, led by Roland Robertson (1992, 1995), seems to capture a more

accurate picture of the current state of globalization. By emphasizing local influences that take place within the process of globalization, Robertson's theory views globalization from the bottom-up. Mike Featherstone (1996) notes that the *glocalization* process involves the dialectic relationship between the global and the local.

*Glocalization* can also be explained by people experiencing the world as a place shared by all nation-states and collectivities; hence an awareness that the global boundary is filled with local diversity. This consciousness further leads to a considerable amount of anxiety among nation-states leading to defining more rigid boundaries between themselves and others. Featherstone (1996) believes that this awareness can also be viewed as reactions of local agents (individual, societal, national) to rediscover difference, particularity, and localism, all of which generate a sense of the limits of global cultural uniformity. Post modernism, late capitalism, feminism, and other grassroots movements have emerged from this rising global-local interaction.

Many scholars (Hannigan 1995; Anderson 1997; So & Lee 1999) state that the rise of the environmental movement can also be understood as part of a broader social movement toward postmodernity. Postmodernism opposes grand meta-narratives and emphasizes increasingly particularized ideas and cultures. It also advocates local grassroots movements and local participation in decision-making concerning world economic development as rejecting the overarching power of transnational companies and other supra-national institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Other researchers further view environmental journalism in light of social movements (Eyerman & Jamison 1991, Neuzil & Kovarik 1996). Anderson (1997) explains that the environmental movement is seen as an epitome of a new social movement which can be characterized by less rigid organizational structures, grassroots activism outside of established political institutions, and the pursuit of wider cultural and lifestyle changes. Current environmentalism is characterized by holistic approaches with an emphasis on political ecology. Diverse ranges of environmental groups (including proliferating grassroots groups) mobilize action at several different levels, including local, national, state, and international.

The new social movement's agenda and ideologies include ungoverned civil society, new values and lifestyles, informal network and grassroots, and direct action and cultural politics (Anderson 1997, pp. 77-78).

The field of *glocalization* and media studies can benefit from scrutinizing the roles of media (local, national, and global) in the current confrontation over environmental issues. As we know, the media make up a complex institution. While operating in a local environment, media also are products of increasing globalization, such as international media industries, international exchanges, education, and training programs for journalists. Apparently global and local media are performing twofold functions in response to globalization. One role is to disseminate a global consciousness about the global environment. The other role is to defend the benefits or profits of their own entities, and of the institutions in which they serve.

## **Environmental Issues and News Media**

Most media scholars have largely accepted the notion that news is not *something out there*. The media's role as being "objective" and "impartial" has largely been discarded. Berkowitz (1997) stresses that news content is shaped by many factors that can be identified as 1) individual influences on media content 2) media routines that constrain individual journalists and affect what gets defined as news; 3) organizational influences; 4) extra-media forces such as sources of information, income, and technology limitation; and 5) ideology, which defines what events are newsworthy.

The social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann 1967) asserts that since there is no one single "objective" truth, what defines "realities" can be diverse, and often competing depending on the various definitions provided by different groups and cultures. Because the same set of facts suggests diverse meanings to different groups at different times, each group holds its own consensual reality. Neuzil & Kovarik (1996) state that the emergence of environmental issues as social problems depends on social recognition, and the media's participation in the environmental movement is indispensable. Hannigan (1995) maintains that media visibility is pivotal in moving environmental problems from conditions to issues to

policy concerns. Without media coverage, it is unlikely that a serious problem will either enter into the sphere of public discourse or become part of the political process (p. 58). In the global environmental movement, the public needs the mass media to construct the reality of the problem for them.

The role of the media, as many argue, is to point out social problems to the public. Robert Park (1941) says, "a public will disappear should the mass media ignore a social problem, and the media's ability to define a problem is their true power" (Neuzil & Kovarik 1996, p.xv). As a consequence, groups concerned with advancing their causes seek media access. Park (1941) further notes, "the power of the press is the influence that newspapers exercise in the formation of public opinion and in mobilizing the community for political action" (as cited in Neuzil & Kovarik 1996).

Yet scholars, such as Schoenfeld *et al.* (1979), and Hannigan (1995), demonstrate that it is not easy for journalists to understand or initiate issues regarding environmental problems. Journalists themselves have to depend upon other interest groups, such as NGOs or government officials, to mobilize concern outside of the media mesh. Often, the media's lenses reflect the interest of news sources and/or the experience of local communities the media serve. Other studies on the role of media and environmental news find that journalists do not think specifically in terms of "environmental news." Instead, they report "news" (Wilkins & Patterson 1987, Sachsman 1993, Miller 1997). When journalists see events pertaining to the environment, they evaluate what they see according to news values. Such news values as impact, timeliness, proximity, prominence, and human interest are all deciding factors when journalists file their reports and what they emphasize in their stories. Any environmental story, therefore, will only become news if it contains "news values." Cohen & Wolfsfeld (1993) assert that news of conflicts are often framed and transmitted with a particular audience in mind. "These messages may have very different outcomes, however, when they are received and decoded by additional audiences" (p. xix).

## Pak Mun Dam: A *Glocal* Discourse

### *Global Discontent*

The Pak Mun Dam controversy in Thailand, which emerged as a local dispute, can be seen as part of the global battle over the management of international water resources, the conservation of biodiversity, global ecosystems, and most importantly the notion of sustainable development. Dam opponents argue that the decision to construct a dam in developing countries is often made by local politicians and the World Bank policy makers without participation by local people who are most affected by them.

The influence of the World Bank and the IMF as two major financiers of development projects in Third World countries has grown during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The World Bank and the IMF have been involved with development policies in different countries all over the world. Rich (1994) states that the World Bank is a powerful arbiter in cases of countries with difficult debt situations and problems meeting loan payments. Without approval from the Bank and the IMF, countries today are excluded from virtually any other international funding sources (Rich 1994). Emphasizing its primary goal to eliminate poverty in poor countries, the World Bank has approved approximately 75 percent of Bank loans to projects involving infrastructure development such as large-dam building, roads, power plants, schools, and irrigation networks (Ruthrauff 1994). In the past 50 years the World Bank has given 527 loans totaling \$58 billion, to aid constructing at least 604 dams in 93 countries, according to Danaher (1994). Of the 175 countries with recorded and available data, more than 150 have hydropower resources. In more than half of these countries, hydropower accounts for more than 50 percent of electricity they depend upon.

Critics repeatedly attack the World Bank's continuing support for large dam constructions, citing various unwanted impacts upon humans and the environment. The main concern points to the submersion of often-fertile farmlands and forestry zones, destruction of natural habitat, and the release of greenhouse gases like methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (Pottinger 1996). Others contend that instead of alleviating poverty, large dams move poor people into absolute poverty, as a result of the loss of land and the shift in livelihood (Danaher 1994). Others cite the possibilities of health problems caused by stagnant water

areas that become breeding grounds for disease-bearing flies and mosquitoes; human rights violations in the process of land evacuation; corruption and abuse of political power, and disintegration of local communities.

Overall, the tensions over large dam construction challenge the fundamental concept of global development. The anti-dam movement is hobbled by fights between grassroots non-governmental organizations that, in past decades, have grown dramatically to oppose the negative impacts of development imposed on local communities by dominant superstructures such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and IMF. With the help of global communication technology, the anti-dam grassroots network has expanded. Non-governmental organizations galvanize local support in different parts of the world. Major anti-large dam campaigns emerged in such cases as the Narmada Valley Dam in India, the Nam Thuen 2 in Laos, the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in China, and the Biobio Dams in Chile. The World Commission for Dams states that “most stakeholders today acknowledge that the polarization of opponents and proponents [of large dam building] has resulted in a virtual breakdown of constructive dialogue” (World Bank 1997, p. 1).

### *Local Resistance*

If century-old Buddhist temples scattered around the country are symbols of traditional Thailand, dams have emerged as the “temples of modern Thailand” (Chinvarakorn 2000). In the “development era,” 128 large irrigation and hydroelectric dams have been built in Thailand since the 1960s; and around 600,000 people have been resettled (Tangwisuttijit & Hongthong 2000). Thai environmentalists argue that the benefits of these large dams to support industrial development in urban areas are at the expense of the environment and rural communities.

The Pak Mun conflict spanned seven governments and six prime ministers from the period between 1989 and 2001. In September 1988, Thailand’s governmental agency, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), proposed to build a 136-megawatt hydropower dam on the mouth of the Mun River in a northeastern province of Thailand, Ubon Ratchathani. The EGAT’s announcement of the Pak Mun Dam project was tested by mass gatherings led by local politicians and activists in the early months of 1989. The Mun River is the largest tributary of the International Mekong River that runs through five countries in

Southeast Asia — Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Environmentalists claim that the biodiversity size of the Mun-Mekong system is surpassed only by that of the Amazon and possibly the river Zaire. Therefore, the building of the Pak Mun Dam would pose a tremendous threat upon the regional environment.

In the early stages, Pak Mun Dam protesters questioned the validity of an impact assessment study done by EGAT. The protesters claimed that EGAT's study was conducted 10 years before the dam was proposed, thus ignoring its real effects upon local communities whereas the number of affected local villagers was also unclear. Yet the cabinet approved the dam project in November 1991 under the premiership of the late Chatichai Choonhavan. In October of the same year, Thailand hosted an annual World Bank summit in Bangkok. The World Bank was expected to announce its monetary support of the Pak Mun project at this meeting.

Aside from being a meeting venue for World Bank executives, Bangkok became a rendezvous for several thousand local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and environmentalists that held a parallel conference called "Forum of the Poor." The Forum was used to criticize the World Bank's development policies by bringing hundreds of people from around the world who were adversely affected by the various projects aided by the World Bank. The Pak Mun dam protesters were among them.

In May 1992, Thailand experienced political unrest when military juntas led by General Suchinda Kraprayoon staged a *coup d'état* that ousted the Chatichai government. A number of pro-democracy protesters were killed in Bangkok streets. After the turmoil, the former Thai ambassador to Washington, D.C., Anand Panyarachun, was appointed interim Prime Minister. The Pak Mun protest went on with a series of arguments between EGAT officials and NGO-led protesters over reparation for affected villagers and fishermen. By the end of 1992 amidst ongoing protests and political confusion, the World Bank announced its approval for a loan of 525 million Baht (\$21 million) to EGAT to support the Pak Mun project.

Prior to the completion of the dam construction in 1994, rallies turned into riots when affected local villagers sided with some politicians, and NGOs and student groups clashed with EGAT-managed Pak Mun Dam supporters at the dam site. Activists accused EGAT of misinforming the public about the damage the dam would cause local communities and its

refutation to pay adequate monetary compensation to displaced villagers and fishermen who lost their income due to the dwindling fish stock. These two issues became the primary agenda of the protesters from 1995 to 1996, when Thailand held another general election. In 1996, former military general Chavalit Yongchaiyuth, leader of New Aspiration Party, won the election and took over Thailand's premiership. In 1997, under his administration Thailand went into a financial crisis.

The Pak Mun conflict resurfaced when the EGAT released a counter study carried out by the World Bank's Operations Evaluations Department (OED) in 1998, rebutting the environmentalists' claims of adverse impacts of the Pak Mun Dam. The study praised the resettlement program under the Pak Mun project as the "best practice" among all projects the World Bank has supported (Kongrut 2000). However, in the same report the World Bank and EGAT admitted that since there was a lack of baseline research on fisheries, it was difficult for them to determine how many fishermen were affected by the dam. As a result, local villagers exaggerated their losses and demanded more compensation (Sharma & Imhof 1999).

Despite continuing protests, news stories about the Pak Mun were left on a back burner until April 2000 when the World Commission on Dams (WCD) released an assessment report criticizing the low returns of the project. This time, the Pak Mun dispute rocked the Democrat-led administration when local NGOs and student activists mobilized poor villagers affected by various governmental development schemes to stage a mass rally in front of the Government House in Bangkok. The Pak Mun protest turned into an anti-government campaign with increasing public pressure for the government to resign and dissolve the House of Representatives. In July 2000, riots broke out when police officers were seen brutalizing protest villagers after several protesters attempted to climb up the wall to get inside the Government House. In December 2000, the Democrat Party suffered an embarrassing defeat to the Thai Rak Thai (Thai Love Thai) Party in the general election. In January 2001, the Thai Rak Thai Party leader Thaksin Shinawatra claimed Thailand's top executive position. In April 2001, Mr. Shinawatra ordered eight sluice gates at the Pak Mun Dam opened for one year in order to allow fish to migrate and to increase fish population, and to further study the environmental impacts of the Pak Mun Dam. Local fishermen called the Prime Minister's order their victory, but NGOs and some media institutions continued to pressure the

government to demolish the Pak Mun Dam.

Since the conflict spanned more than ten years from 1989 to 2001, Thai environmentalists and dam protesters have developed a close network with international non-governmental organizations. Because of their dependence upon foreign money, the Thai NGOs are often accused of teaming up with foreign environmentalists to destabilize Thailand's national security, and defame the country's reputation.

## **Research Questions**

In order to understand how the Thai press makes meanings of this global-cum-local environmental conflict, the research looks into four significant questions. They are:

### Research Question 1:

- What is the extent of the news coverage about the Pak Mun conflict that appeared in each newspaper? This question aims to decide the amount of coverage and the level of attention each paper gave to the conflict.

### Research Question 2:

- What news sources do Thai journalists depend upon? This question probes the press' reliance on particular sources. Since there are many actors involved, both global and local, whose voice (s) does each newspaper reflect?

### Research Question 3:

- How do Thai journalists frame the Pak Mun conflict? What are the dominant themes reflected in both newspapers? What are the differences and the similarities of frames between the two newspapers?

### Research Question 4:

- What are the roles Thai newspapers play in creating a public understanding about the global environment from the local Pak Mun news coverage?

## **Methodology**

The study scrutinizes 264 and 270 "front-page" and "local-page" news stories that appear in two daily Thai-language newspapers — *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* respectively. The period of

this study spans 12 years beginning when the Pak Mun conflict emerged as news in early 1989 until the end of the first trimester of 2001 when the Thai government ordered an opening of the dam gates to allow water to run back into the Mun River. Since the research premise stems from the perspective that news media construct news stories differently based upon their audience, *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* are chosen for this comparative study due primarily to the diversity of their readership.

- *Thai Rath* is one of the oldest Thai-language dailies in Thailand with a mass circulation of almost two million copies, the largest among approximately 400 news publications in Thailand. *Thai Rath* is well known for its “blood-and-guts” news style. Among Thai media scholars, *Thai Rath* is often referred to as a “popular,” or “quantity” newspaper.
- *Matichon* is regarded as one of Thailand’s most respected newspapers among Thai intellectuals. This Thai-language newspaper has gained public respect for its in-depth news coverage, and political and social analysis. With a circulation half of *Thai Rath*’s, *Matichon* is known for its associations with center-left social critics and activists.

To address the first research question concerning the amount of coverage each newspaper devotes to the conflict, the researcher tallied the number of news stories about the Pak Mun Dam from each newspaper. Since each of the above-mentioned newspapers has its own library and provides news clippings to the public, the research relied on their news collection based on a keyword index – “Pak Mun Dam.”

The second research question concerns the dependency levels of different news sources. The study divides news sources into three major groups: 1) government authorities including administration, police officers, and EGAT officials; 2) activists and environmentalists from local and international non-governmental organizations; and 3) rural villagers both for and against the dam project. By looking into the source dependency, the research aims to determine dominant voices reflected by these two papers.

Last, the study borrows from Erving Goffman's frame analysis to study the meanings that emerged from news messages created by the Thai press. According to Goffman (1974), frames are definitions of a situation built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events — at least social ones — and our subjective involvement in them" (pp. 10-11). People go through their social and political lives attempting to sift through a remarkably large amount of information. Frames (or *schemas*) function as an organizational tool that helps people to interpret, process and store that data. Gitlin (1980) acknowledges media frame analysis as a study of "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (p.7). Cohen & Wolfsfeld 1993) point out that the concept of *media frames* is closely related to Goffman's theory of frames analysis. They believe that "decisions about what is and is not important, explanation about the causes and consequences of events, and attempts to associate new stories with old ones, all contribute to the creation of media frames" (Cohen & Wolfsfeld 1993, p. xiv).

## Findings

### Reporting Frequencies

Despite differences in readership between *Thai Rath* and *Matichon*, when comparing the amount of Pak Mun coverage between 1989 and 2001, the numbers of stories appearing in both newspapers were relatively similar. A tabulation of the number of stories from both newspapers within the period studied revealed three distinct stages of news coverage: 1) From 1989 to 1994 representing the period from when the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) proposed the Pak Mun project to the time when the dam construction was complete; 2) Between 1995 and 1999 referring to the period after the completion of the project to the point prior to the release of the assessment of the project returns by the World Commission on Dams. (During this second stage, the media attention in the Pak Mun stories was scattered); and 3) The entire year 2000 and early 2001 when environmentalists mobilized mass rallies against governmental development projects in local provinces and in Bangkok. This period encompassed a general election, the loss of the Democrat-led party in the election, and the announcement of the new prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra of the dam release.

The early news coverage of Pak Mun kicked off with the press' allowing the Pak Mun opponents to set a public agenda. The early reports saw both papers rely upon concerns from the opposition over negative impact of the proposed dam project. Yet when the year 1989 came to a close, *Matichon* filed 13 stories presenting both sides almost evenly. *Thai Rath* meanwhile ran only two two-inch column reports emphasizing local disapproval of the proposed dam project.

**Table I – Frequencies of Pak Mun news coverage per year by *Thai Rath* and *Matichon***

Year	<i>Thai Rath</i>	<i>Matichon</i>
1989	2	13
1990	18	11
1991	18	18
1992	13	7
1993	39	32
1994	53	53
1995	1	3
1996	0	2
1997	1	0
1998	1	1
1999	0	2
2000	106	111
2001 (Jan.- Mar.)	12	17
TOTAL	264	270

Throughout 1990 and 1991, we see the news from an “objective” perspective, presenting both the pro and con debates of EGAT’s proposal to construct the dam. In 1991, *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* each published 18 stories, most focusing on the upcoming World Bank meeting to be held in October of that year, and the Bank’s pending decision to approve the \$21 million loans to EGAT for the Pak Mun project.

In 1992, the press coverage in the Pak Mun story slightly declined, due possibly to political turmoil during the pro-democracy protest in Bangkok against Suchinda Kraprayoon’s military regime. *Matichon* had five reports on Pak Mun in March with one article each in June and August, and 13 for *Thai Rath* (eight items in March, one in April and two each in May and August). From the end of 1993 to the middle of 1994 when the Pak Mun project was close to

completion, the media interest surged following renewed anti-dam activities. This time, the media followed the environmentalists' agenda on demands for fair reparation from EGAT. The total of news stories within these two years was 85 in *Matichon*, and 92 in *Thai Rath*.

Between 1995 and 1999, the media's interest in the Pak Mun dispute dropped sharply to near-zero. Toward the end of 1996 the Thai media concentrated on domestic political and economic entanglements. In 1997, when Thailand went into a financial crisis, resulting in a series of power transfers from one political party to another, the two papers almost completely ignored the Pak Mun news. *Thai Rath* ran only three brief reports during this five-year period, while *Matichon* had five news stories and three in-depth analyses that forecast an end of the Pak Mun confrontation. While *Thai Rath* did not show any apparent bias for one side or the other, its last coverage appeared on February 19, 1998, reassuring the reader that EGAT was seriously committed to paying more compensation to affected villagers and fishermen.

The press' attention on the Pak Mun resumed dramatically in early 2000 in response to the release of an assessment report done by the World Commission on Dams, coupled with a series of mass rallies organized by the Assembly of the Poor that launched a nation-wide campaign attacking the government's failure in solving economic problems for the rural poor. From January 2000 to March 2001, *Thai Rath* printed a total of 118 stories whereas *Matichon* ran 128 stories on Pak Mun.

### Source Dependency

Regarding source dependency between the two Thai dailies, throughout the 12-year-conflict period, the popular *Thai Rath* appeared to put more weight on the government authorities as its primary sources of information. As Table II indicates, such governmental officials as responsible ministers, EGAT officials, cabinet members, and police officers, combined for 53.03 per cent of the sources quoted in *Thai Rath*. Environmentalists and local activists made up a total of 25.05 per cent in *Thai Rath*, and only 13 international environmentalists, such as several Greenpeace members, are quoted. In terms of rural representatives, *Thai Rath* gave slightly more weight to Pak Mun Dam supporters than its opponents. As shown in Table II, dam protesters comprised 6.63 percent while dam supporters made up 10.13 percent.

**Table II – Sourcing for News Reports on the Pak Mun conflict in *Thai Rath*  
and *Matichon* from 1989 to 2001**

<b>Sources*</b>	<b>Number of Sources</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of Sources</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	<i>Thai Rath</i>	<i>Thai Rath</i>	<i>Matichon</i>	<i>Matichon</i>
<b>Government Authorities</b>				
Administration	415	38.21	369	31.51
EGAT Officials	87	8.01	74	6.32
Others	74	6.81	105	8.97
Police Officers				
<b>Politicians, Members of Parliament</b>				
Total	576	53.03	548	46.80
<b>Environmentalists</b>				
Local NGOs, student activists	272	25.05	311	26.56
International NGOs	13	1.20	16	1.37
Total	284	26.25	327	27.93
<b>Rural Villagers</b>				
Dam Protesters	72	6.63	135	11.53
Dam Supporters	110	10.13	79	6.74
Total	182	16.76	214	18.27
<b>Others</b>				
Bangkokians, academicians	32	2.95	59	5.04
World Bank Officials	11	1.01	23	1.96
Total	43	3.96	82	7.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Number of sources is determined by the frequency of the sources quoted

*Matichon's* reliance of sources appears to have a similar pattern to that of *Thai Rath*. Government voices dominate news stories, followed by sources from environmentalists and rural villagers, respectively. The "quality" paper quoted governmental authorities more extensively than other sources. But when comparing it to *Thai Rath*, *Matichon* relied on the governmental authorities approximately seven percent less than *Thai Rath* (53.03 per cent in *Thai Rath*, and 46.80 percent *Matichon*). On the other hand, *Matichon* quoted environmentalists and activists slightly more often than *Thai Rath* (27.93 percent in *Matichon* versus 26.25 percent in *Thai Rath*). It is also interesting to see *Matichon* quoting dam protesters five percent more often than that shown in *Thai Rath* coverage (11.53 percent in *Matichon* and 6.63 percent in *Thai Rath*).

## News Frames

### The Common Frame

Despite the distinction of readerships between *Thai Rath* and *Matichon*, the two Thai newspapers' content is constructed on certain narratives that seem to have existed in the Thai society. First, both papers framed the Pak Mun controversy as a confrontation between the national government and the rural community. Although issues concerning ecological and environmental impacts of the dam were occasionally presented, the Pak Mun news as reported by both newspapers was overshadowed by routine coverage of protesters' activities and official viewpoints emphasizing disruptive events. At this stage, both newspapers appeared to reduce complex issues surrounding the Pak Mun Dam into a general frame of "national progress" versus "local sacrifices."

The second predominant narrative emerging from this analysis surrounds the media depiction of "bad guys" versus "victims." Both Thai newspapers draw upon a conventional news narrative to portray different images of four central actors in the conflict. These four actors are the Thai government, EGAT, the local villagers, and the non-governmental organization representatives.

### *National 'Progress' versus Local 'Sacrifice'*

In the early stage of the Pak Mun news coverage, we see both *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* allowed oppositional voices to set the agenda by questioning the benefits of the Pak Mun project for

local communities. As the protest activities continued, the two papers soon became skeptical about the motives of the dam opposition. During this period, we witness the two presses functioned as agents of control by constantly portraying the protesters as "social deviants." News narrowly concentrated on disruptive behaviors of the protesters. Questions about "ulterior motives" of the Pak Mun protesters were constantly posed. The media used different government officials, such as prime ministers, ministers, Ubon Ratchathani governors, mayors, high-level police officers, and businessmen, to criticize the protesters' behaviors and their "hidden agenda."

Meanwhile, the media quoted leaders of the dam protesters, most often non-governmental organization representatives, to counterattack the government's sincerity in solving the problems. In general, the media frame mirrored a clash between the state (represented by EGAT, and the government) and a small group of people with a certain political agenda, whose concern was putting their own personal interests over national development. Here are examples of the national progress versus local sacrifice frame found consistently throughout the study period from both papers:

On April 15, 1989, *Matichon* quoted a district chief responsible for areas to be flooded by the Pak Mun Dam to the effect that, "most people in this district agree with the construction of the dam, especially villagers who live by the proposed dam site. Those who oppose the project are few, and they do not entirely understand the usefulness of the dam." *Thai Rath*, on September 17, 1989, reported that the Pak Mun Dam would help local communities and the national economy. A government official stated, "There will be no environmental impacts upon local communities. Only 400 families will be removed out of the area." Meanwhile, *Thai Rath* interviewed Ubon Ratchathani's governor who said, "The Dam project will improve the economy within the area. Local government is planning to develop the surrounding dam site as tourist resorts and a windsurfing spot. The province has proposed that the cabinet approve construction of a casino in this area. The benefits from the dam to our nation are enormous."

Again, three days later, *Matichon* interviewed the Ubon Ratchathani governor who asserted that the dam project would provide great benefits to local communities. In *Matichon*, the governor said, "The protesters have a political agenda to deceive local villagers for gaining their votes [in a general election]. I have surveyed the opinions of people in both public and private sectors in Ubon Ratchathani (province); they all support the Pak Mun project." In the

same news report, *Matichon* included an opinion of the president of the Ubon Ratchathani Chamber of Commerce who pointed to the benefits the Dam would bring to the province while disregarding the possibility that it would adversely affect the environment. The Chamber of Commerce president commented, "Protesters are creating confusion among the public." On June 23, 1989, Prime Minister's Office minister Chalerm Yubamrung, responsible for EGAT and its development projects, was interviewed by *Matichon*. According to Mr. Yubamrung, "Dam protesting is a very common phenomena. Whenever a dam construction is proposed, people who disagree with the project will make noise. These people want to destroy the government."

In a similar vein, on February 14, 1990, *Matichon* quoted Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan emphasizing, "There are only a few hundred dam opponents. Hundreds of thousands of people who agree with the project did not come out on the street. If a government pays too much attention to the opposition, that government has to keep on solving problems [for a few Thais] forever." On the same day, *Thai Rath* referred to the Ubon Ratchathani governor who claimed, "Besides 200 opponents, the majority of the Ubon people want the Dam. The people who don't want the Dam are only those who are afraid to lose their land. But it is the responsibility of the provincial government to safeguard the benefits of the whole nation." In March of the same year, *Thai Rath* further reported that the Prime Minister insisted on the construction of the Pak Mun Dam despite opposition and "obstruction." *Thai Rath* also referred to the protesters as "those who might have been misguided" by a third party with a hidden agenda to undercut the state authority.

In 1991, during the World Bank executive meeting, *Matichon* reported on October 19 in a big headline: "Pak Mun Battle Heats Up. Clashes. Expose [NGOs] Taking Money from Greenpeace to Protest." The news story included interviews with several World Bank officials about the Pak Mun project and the pending decision on the loans. A World Bank official from Central Africa was cited: "The World Bank [officials] thoroughly looks at positive and negative impacts of the project. Even though information from the protesters will be taken into account, only 2-3 opponents won't affect the World Bank's decision [in providing a loan]. In my opinion, EGAT has proven to be reliable and responsible for the environment. The dam helps the tourism industry, and promotes the local economy."

The same report also quoted high-ranking EGAT official reassuring the Thai readers

that "The Pak Mun project is very beneficial to the Thai people and foreign investors. The people who disagree with the project represent only five percent of the Thai population. The government has given too much freedom to dam protesters. These protesters are manipulated by foreigners who, so far, have opposed the construction of any dam project."

On March 6, 1993, *Matichon* quoted Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, stating: "Responsible officials are now fed up with talking to the protesters because the talks yield no fruit. The protesters represent a handful of people who don't understand the benefits of the government's project. The majority of Thai people understand [that the government needs to think of all sectors of society]." On March 12, 1993, Mr. Leekpai also said, "the government belongs to all Thais, and works for all Thais. The government cannot serve only the interest of a few."

Again, on March 13, 1993, a Prime Minister's Office Minister was quoted in *Matichon* saying, "As an elected representative of Ubon Ratchathani, I know that nearly all of Ubon people support the dam building. The Ubon people who don't like the dam project are only about 100-200. The rest of the protesters are from other areas. These outsiders should let the Ubon people decide what is good for them. The outsiders must not interfere in local matters. We can take care of ourselves." On April 23, 1993, *Thai Rath* cited then deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyuth saying, "The government will go ahead with the project for the sake of national development. Ninety-nine percent of the local people have supported the Dam." The same report further highlighted suspicions that the dam opponents might have some hidden political agenda to undermine the government's power. *Thai Rath* quoted a local politician as stating: "Most dam opponents are not local people. They are outsiders. These people are not affected by the Dam."

Up to 1994, the news coverage in both *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* generally reflected official attitudes toward the "Pak Mun mob" and environmentalists. Both papers described the protesters as people who selfishly lamented their own loss over national development. Despite extensive Pak Mun coverage, the media appeared to marginalize the protesters' key messages concerning the loss of the people's livelihood, the disintegration of local communities, and the unclear impacts of the Dam project. The media content was overwhelmingly zeroed in on disorderly activities, such as the burning of EGAT officials' graffiti and national identification cards, the hunger strikes, the use of excessive noise and unsanitary living conditions at

demonstration sites, the violent confrontations between “the mob supporting the Pak Mun Dam,” and “the mob against the Pak Mun Dam.”

*“The Victims” versus “The Corrupt Powers”*

A close examination of the Thai media’s framing of four key actors in the Pak Mun conflict — the government authorities, EGAT, the environmental activists, and the rural poor — indicates the Thai media’s use of a narrative pattern in their news presentation. This news narrative seems to have stemmed from a cultural framework that exists in Thai society. This narrative is constructed surrounding the two dominant images of “villains” and “victims.”

Based upon their experience about the pervasiveness of corruption and abuse of power among Thai government officials, Thai citizens in general are inclined to question the governmental authorities and politicians’ sincerity in solving national problems. In the case of the Pak Mun dispute, the study finds that throughout the 12-year conflict period, the Thai press did resonate this belief. Evidently, both *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* similarly tended to refer to the governmental authorities and EGAT officials involve in the Pak Mun conflict as “power abusers,” “liars,” “corrupt,” “mean,” “ignorant,” and “evil.” Since the conflict spanned six governments and lasted over 12 years, the public and the media alike looked for an explanation to justify the unresolved conflict. Dishonest elements inside the governmental powers appeared to be the press’ main focus here.

While the government powers are considered “villains,” the rural communities and rural protesters affected by the dam project are commonly portrayed as the “victims.” Through the lens of the two Thai dailies, these rural poor were not only “victimized” by the government, they were “ignorant” and often “fell victims” to NGO activists and environmentalists for their political maneuvers. When these rural poor were out on the streets to protest against the government development policies, the media were doubtful about their ability to negotiate and communicate with the governmental authorities. We also see earlier in the research finding on source dependency that the media relied more extensively on local activists who assisted in the protests as spokespersons for the protesters rather than the rural villagers themselves. In other words, it is evident that the media’s dominant attitude toward the rural poor, based upon their portrayal, was condescending. The Thai readers were occasionally told that the rural villagers received money to leave their farms to “help the NGOs protest.” Overall, the press tended to

question the extent of “real” impacts the Pak Mun project had upon rural communities.

While the two newspapers often attacked the sincerity of the Thai governments, they were also uncertain about the NGO activists’ political intents. This suspicion was expressed in how they constructed the NGOs’ images. Both *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* repeatedly quoted governmental officials accusing the NGOs of being “manipulators” and “instigators behind the scene.” By often repeating the governmental voices, the press created an impression that the Thai activists might benefit from the protests by “collaborating with” some “third parties,” such as opposition political parties, or foreigners, to incite social unrest. While *Matichon* was less critical of the environmentalists’ involvement in the Pak Mun argument, *Thai Rath* constantly reminded its readers of the possibility that there might have been other foreign elements influencing the local NGOs. By using some derogatory terms such as “Yoon” (Japanese), “Khaek” (Indian), “Lao” (Laotian), “Kaew” (Vietnamese), to refer to foreign environmentalists, it is possible that the Thai press further created a sense of distrust of the environmental movement as a whole.

### Frame Shifts

#### *Thai Rath – Protesters are Social Deviants versus Matichon – Empowering the Poor*

By early 2000, *Matichon* and *Thai Rath* started to report stories from the Pak Mun in a different light. Initially, both newspapers began to question the government’s abilities to create benign developmental projects. However, it is evident that *Matichon*’s attitude toward the Pak Mun conflict shifted to emphasize the plights of the rural poor. In contrast, *Thai Rath* continued to present the Pak Mun conflict as an *unresolved civil unrest*. By printing more news analysis and features, *Matichon* managed to connect the Pak Mun conflict to the wider frame of global issues, such as sustainable development, participatory democracy, and the global environment. On the other hand, *Thai Rath* wrote about the Pak Mun stories based largely on routine patterns with little in-depth analysis.

In the early months of 2000, high media attention returned to the Pak Mun news. Both papers reported on a series of mass rallies staged by thousands of the rural poor who were disgruntled with various governmental development projects nationwide. Differences in news frames between *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* explicitly emerged during this period. *Thai Rath* maintained its conventional story line by zeroing in on daily occurrences, such as the

protesters' activities and responses from government authorities. *Matichon* began to denounce the failure of the Chuan Administration in solving problems for the rural poor.

The two presses framed the conflict rather differently when the Pak Mun demonstrators seized the dam site in Ubon Ratchathani from EGAT. On May 21, 2000, following an op-ed column written by a university lecturer attacking the government's "insincerity" in national social and economic development policies, *Matichon* ran a news article highlighting the empowerment of the popular movement; as *Matichon* put it: "Shaking the real image of Chuan. Abandon the poor." On the very same day, *Thai Rath* discussed the possibilities for violence as a result of the confrontation between the "pro-Pak Mun mob" and the "anti-Pak Mun mob." *Matichon* contradicted *Thai Rath* by detailing the many non-violent methods the protesters employed to garner the public attention about their problems.

On the next day, *Matichon* went on to file a news report with a quote from a World Bank official "declaring" that the Pak Mun Dam was a "total failure." *Thai Rath* had no coverage of the World Bank official's opinion, instead flaunting a headline: "Attack the Government. (Protesters) Make Threats Like Dogs Fight." One week after the protesters seized the Dam site and denied access of EGAT workers to the dam's main water gate, *Thai Rath* reported exclusively the views of high-ranking EGAT officials warning the country about possible damage the blockade might cause to local industrial zones and urban areas. *Matichon*, on the flip side, saw EGAT's claims as "threats," questioning the sincerity of the EGAT officials. The following weeks, until early June 2000, *Thai Rath* went on to highlight EGAT's forecast about some possible economic damage, such as power outages in metropolitan areas and possible floods along the Mun River banks. On June 3, 2000, *Thai Rath* quoted an EGAT official stating that unless the protesters allowed EGAT to return and monitor the main water gate, the dam would collapse.

*Matichon* apparently played down EGAT's statement over the possible losses caused by the protesters' taking over the dam site. On June 5, the newspaper ran a commentary justifying the protesters' actions. As one *Matichon* columnist remarked, "The Pak Mun Dam is under siege because demonstrations have become the only public communication channel for the poor to get attention from the government, Thai society, and the media." While *Thai Rath* relentlessly labeled the Pak Mun protesters as "the mob" during the last quarter of the year

2000, *Matichon* unmistakably switched to refer to the protesters as “the poor.”

On June 13, *Matichon* printed a two-page column written by an anti-Pak Mun Dam campaign leader, Wanida Tantiwitthayapitak. The article condemned the Chuan government for using a police force crack down on the protesters in a non-violent demonstration. Ms. Tantiwitthayapitak compared the marathon struggle of the Pak Mun villagers to Mahatma Gandhi’s fights against British colonialism. On June 22, a *Matichon* columnist, Prasert Phalitkarnphim, demanded that the Chuan government decommission the Pak Mun Dam since the hydropower dam “is obstructing friendship between Thai society and the poor, who have long struggled to be heard; but nobody is hearing.”

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The Pak Mun conflict was indeed a complex news story. Not only did the controversy concern local and international environments, the Pak Mun Dam project directly and indirectly affected both local and global politics. Aside from its complexity as a news story, the Pak Mun project involved a multiple layer of actors \_ local, national, and global.

As mentioned at the outset, in this study I place the Thai press into the center of the Pak Mun environmental controversy. By addressing four important questions dealing with the level of press attention to the conflict, the press’ use of various sources, and the meanings construction and representation, this research reveals many facets of the Thai press. Initially, the level of attention to this environmental conflict appears to be largely determined by two major factors. The first factor was the protest activities. The research shows that the Thai media often follow the agendas set by news managers such as student activists, NGO representatives, government authorities or local politicians. Evidently, the press coverage of the Pak Mun project is extensively centered on protest activities and government authorities’ responses to the protests. To the Thai press, the various confrontations between dam opponents and dam supporters are valuable news items.

Another vital factor influencing the level of media attention to Pak Mun news was the political and economic situation at home. Ongoing environmental and social conflicts are left under-reported (or un-reported) when there are more pressing news events. Stories about continuing conflict are often given little attention when there is no “new development.” As

Table I indicates, the media interest in the Pak Mun stories fluctuated. Both *Thai Rath* and *Matichon* almost completely ignored the Pak Mun story after the completion of the Dam construction and during the economic turmoil, in spite of ongoing protests against the project in the rural province. Right after the World Commission on Dams (WCD) issued the report in 2000 revealing the low returns of the Pak Mun project, we see the resurgence of media interest in the Pak Mun stories. When activists mobilized mass rallies against the government, the press responded very vigorously. During this brief period, the Pak Mun news dominated both newspapers' headlines almost on a daily basis. In fact, the fluctuation of media attention to the Pak Mun Dam conflict seems to be consistent with previous studies on media reporting of environmental stories elsewhere. Allan, Adam & Carter (2000) note that journalists tend to look at environmental news as "event-related and problem-specific" rather than a continuing environmental issue. Miller *et al* (2000), Sachzman (1993) and Wilkins & Patterson (1987) further demonstrate that any environmental story will only be seen as news if it contains "news values." These news values include impact, timeliness, proximity, prominence and human interests. Often, environmentalists make use of these news factors to heighten media interest in their activities. In this case, the Pak Mun Dam protesters resort to "social drama" angles such as law-defying activities in order to sustain news coverage.

Environmental news is similar to other news whereby sources often play key roles in constructing an agenda. Concerning the use of sources for the Pak Mun coverage, the research finds that the Thai press paralleled the practice of western news organizations by depending on "legitimate" voices, such as those of governmental authorities and the environmentalists to define the Pak Mun problems rather than the voices reflected by rural villagers. As we have seen in Table II, governmental voices comprised more than half of all the sources used by both Thai dailies, followed by the NGO activists, then the villagers. Evidently, the two newspapers generally perceived the Pak Mun news as a conflict between two main actors – the national government and the environmental activists (who "lead" the rural poor to protest). Thus, the government authorities were placed into an opposing position to the environmental activists. Consequently, the voices of the rural communities directly impacted by or benefited from the Dam were marginalized. By heavily relying upon these binary oppositional voices, the Thai press might have downplayed the real issues surrounding the local communities. In addition, the Thai media seemed to give little recognition to the opinions of such international actors as

World Bank officials and international NGOs representatives.

Next, the study of news frames reveals that the Thai press makes meanings of the Pak Mun conflict based upon certain templates. In fact, the media's tendency to use a certain story line in reporting conflicts is not uncommon. Many media scholars have found that to attract audience attention, the media have a tradition of forming events into dramatic stories by shaping news into a pattern of a hero, a victim, and a villain. By setting a plot, the journalist's task is to produce pictures in the given situation to fit the scenario. In presenting stories about difficult environmental issues, the media superficially frame the stories in the classic scenario of "goodies against baddies" (Chapman *et al* 1997, p. 46). In this case, the Thai press created the frames for the Pak Mun stories by simplifying the complex environmental issue into a battle between corrupt Thai government officials and the victimized rural poor (who are manipulated by unscrupulous "third parties"). Nevertheless, the portrayals of the actors involved in the Pak Mun conflict were often contradictory. While governmental voices were heavily used as the most valid voices, the governmental officials were also negatively depicted as "evil" and "dishonest." In addition, toward the end of the conflict, the rural poor and environmental activists received a more favorable coverage by *Matichon* than *Thai Rath*. When *Thai Rath* continued to marginalize the protesters as "social deviants," *Matichon* clearly legitimized the anti-dam movement. *Matichon* later focused on "the fight for local communities and the empowerment of the Thai rural poor against social injustice" instead of its previous resonance of mob activities.

Last, the research seeks to find out if the Thai media worked to localize global environmental issue and globalize local environmental issue. The study yields interesting results. *Thai Rath* showed minimal interest in presenting the Pak Mun conflict as a problem concerning the global environment. The popular Thai-language daily appeared to adhere strictly to reporting the news as a domestic political confrontation between the government, EGAT and the Pak Mun opponents. Initially, *Matichon* also treated the Pak Mun conflict as a day-to-day event instead of an issue. Toward the end of the conflict, both papers seemed to be "tired of" the marathon protest, demanding the government find a quick solution to the problem. It is worth noting, however, that *Matichon* placed the Pak Mun dispute into a larger

framework of the global grassroots movement, the human rights issue, and the environmental movement through its in-depth reports and news analyses.

Social constructionists believe that news can be framed in many different ways. Szerszynski and Toogood (2000) maintain that local environmental conflict can also be framed as global – “as settings for global action, or for globally significant or globally representative processes or events” (p. 224). Although it appears in this research that news that comes out from both Thai-language newspapers in regard to the Pak Mun conflict was constructed mainly for local consumption, *Matichon* newspaper has exhibited that local newspapers certainly have ability to mediate experience of their audience about globalization and global environmental problems through its news lens; thus becoming a conjuncture between the local and the global.

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**PROPAGANDA vs. THE MARKET ECONOMY:  
A STUDY OF THE CONGLOMERATION OF  
CHINA'S NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

On Jan. 15, 1996, totally based on its own investment, the *Guangzhou Daily* declared the establishment of the Guangzhou Daily Press Group (GDPG). As China's political system requires, the founding of a "modern socialist press group" (Liang, Y. 1996) obtained both the official sanction of the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the formal approval of the State Press and Publications Administration (SPPA). By June 1994, the number of newspapers in mainland China had reached 2,040, all of which were run by CPC committees at different levels, governmental departments and ministries, enterprises and various organizations (SPPA 1996, p.3). This number hit 2,180 in 1995 (Liang & Li 1995), but few of them were operated in the form of newspaper conglomerates. In fact, the founding of GDPG marked the birth of the first newspaper conglomerate in the People's Republic of China (Li, W. 2001).

Since 1979, the CPC has been pursuing a policy of invigorating the domestic economy and opening the country to the outside world. Prompted by economic reform, the Chinese press has also expanded rapidly, undergoing a series of press reforms. The CPC Fourteenth National Congress, which was held in October 1992, formally declared that China would switch to the socialist market-economy system from the traditional planned-economic system. Soon after the congress, the SPPA urged Chinese newspapers to "go to the market" — to become commodities and enterprises regulated by the rules of the market" (Liang, H. 1992). Since the mid-1990s, the competition among Chinese newspapers for bigger market shares of advertising and circulation has gotten more and more serious. China's Party and government authorities thought it was the right time to establish modernized socialist press groups with Party organs at the core. The purpose was to make the Chinese press more powerful by implementing two fundamental transitions. One was to expand the Chinese press by increasing the number of newspapers and enhancing the

newspapers' quality and efficiency. The other was to change the way of operating newspapers from the extensive model to the intensive model (Li, W. 2001). Only by conglomerating Chinese newspapers, China's central authorities believed, could the development of the Chinese press adapt itself to the world press' developing trends on the one hand and satisfy the requirements of Party and government on the other (SPPA 1996, p.3).

The *Guangzhou Daily* had operated experimentally as a conglomerate since the early 1990s. Consequently, by June 1995, the newspaper, with six subsidiary publications and a wide range of businesses in various areas, had reached a private subscription rate of 61.4 percent and an average daily street sale of more than 180,000 copies. In addition, the weekday circulation of the newspaper had hit 570,000 with an average of 20 pages a day. Its advertising revenues and total revenues had reached 466.25 million yuan (\$51.2 million) and 826.37 million yuan (\$99.5 million), respectively (Liang & Li 1995).

Therefore, in its "Approval of the Establishment of Guangzhou Daily Press Group," the SPPA said:

Having made preparations for several years in the sectors of ideological theories, material prerequisites and operating mechanisms, the *Guangzhou Daily* has gained the comparative advantages of massive penetration, remarkable profits, sufficient talented personnel, advanced technology and efficient delivery network. In sum, in view of its good media effects and considerable profits, the SPPA deems that the *Guangzhou Daily* has qualified itself as China's first press group (SPPA 1996, p.22).

GDPG did not fall short of the central authorities' expectations. Two years after the founding of the newspaper conglomerate, GDPG succeeded in increasing the *Daily*'s daily average pages to 40, weekday circulation to 920,000 copies and advertising revenue to 620 million yuan (\$74.7 million) (*Guangzhou Daily*, January 16, 1998). As a result, in 1998, based on GDPG's two years of operating experience, the SPPA approved the establishment of another five newspaper conglomerates. According to Liu Bo, director of the SPPA's Newspaper Management Bureau, by August 2001, 26 Chinese socialist press groups had already been founded (Liu, B. 2001).

The conglomeration of China's newspaper industry represented by combining Party organs and the capitalist corporate mechanism seems to have led to the "emergence of a propaganda/commercial model of journalism" (Zhao, Y. 1996). Scholars of mass communication have noted, "It appears increasingly that the Chinese government can co-exist with the corporate media giants quite comfortably" (McChesney 1999, p.115).

A propaganda/commercial model in a big socialist country of 1.3 billion people is interesting to

scholars and researchers. What China has constructed in a few short years is a socialist newspaper industry composed of newspaper conglomerates operated as capitalized companies. That model was not outlined in *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert et al. Nor was it thoroughly analyzed by the representative development theories of Merrill, Lowenstein and Picard.

Hence, the purposes of this study are to review commentaries on China's newspaper conglomeration, review relevant mass communication theories about the communist or Chinese press to see what parts of them apply, and analyze the true motives of forming socialist press groups and the characteristics of Chinese newspaper conglomerates. The study employs the case-study approach, content analysis and in-depth interviews to determine the impact of conglomeration on Chinese newspapers.

To achieve these purposes, the study attempts to focus on one major question: What important modification to press theories does the Chinese system represent? To offer a satisfying answer to this question, the study attempts to find answers to the following questions: What was said about the press system in communist countries in *Four Theories of the Press*? What are the development theories that form the basis of the four theories? What are the nature and characteristics of a Chinese newspaper group? What are the motives of forming China's newspaper conglomerates? What is impact of the conglomeration of the Chinese press? What is the rationale for the Party Journalism-Marketization dichotomy? What are the advantages and major problems of conglomeration? What are the trends in the development of Chinese newspaper conglomerates?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In discussing Chinese press system, numerous scholars of mass communication share at least one common view, i.e., the Chinese press system descends from that of the former Soviet Union. Lin Feng (2001) asserts, "Lenin's important doctrine that the basic job of mass communications is to serve as collective agitator, propagandist and organizer has tremendously influenced China's revolutionary journalistic cause." Zhao Yuezhi (1998) also believes this notion of Lenin's "was instrumental in shaping the Chinese Party's journalism policy" (p.19). Schell (1995), and Sun, Chang and Yu (2001) claim that China originally copied its media control system from Stalinist Russia in the 1950s. As a result, it is necessary to begin this literature review with *Four Theories of the Press* and its relevant development

theories. This is because the former, as “the best-known typology of press systems” (Merrill and Lowenstein 1971, p.181), elaborates on the press system of communist countries and later attempts to make the system better.

This literature review examines previous studies and commentaries in respect to (a) *Four Theories of the Press* and the development theories, (b) the motives of forming China’s newspaper conglomerates, and (c) the nature and characteristics of Chinese and U.S. newspaper groups.

#### ***Four Theories of the Press and the Development Theories***

In 1956, Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, three American professors of mass communication, published their *Four Theories of the Press*. The small volume is so authentic that “almost every article and book dealing with the philosophical bases for journalism has alluded to this book, commented on it or quoted from it” (Merrill 1990, p.34). The thesis of this volume, in the three authors’ words, is their assertion about the relationship between a nation’s press system and its social system. They assert, “The press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates” (Siebert et al. 1963, p.1). The four theories discussed by the three authors are: the Authoritarian theory, the Libertarian theory, the Social Responsibility theory and the Soviet Communist theory. They all exactly match the authors’ assertion.

Furthermore, the press system represented by each theory has its own characteristics. For instance, the Soviet Communist theory suggests mass communication should be used instrumentally to suit the needs of state power and Party influence. In addition, quoting the Zurich report, Siebert includes China, Yugoslavia, Portugal and Spain [under Franco] in the bloc led by the Soviet Union and its satellites as “countries where press control is complete” (Siebert et al. 1963, p.31).

Since that was published, almost half a century has passed. In Russia, after the communist government fell in 1990, “Print and broadcast media have played, and continue to play, a vital role in the transition to democratic society following the collapse of the Soviet Empire” (Ferguson 1998). After having adopted its open-door policy and economic reform in 1978, China has been implementing a unique socialist market-economy system and has started to “marketize” its newspaper industry. Because of when it was published, the changes represented by China’s actions were not and could not be analyzed and discussed in *Four Theories of the Press*.

According to Altschull (1995), Marx's analysis of capitalism regards the press as "a central element of the superstructure, the *Überbau*, which the ruling classes erected as their literary, political, and ideological mechanism for maintaining power" (p.201). Furthermore, based on Marxist political economy theory that "a society's economic base determines its superstructure" (Hao, Huang and Zhang 1998), the press should automatically be determined by its economic base and should also be able to influence the base. Consequently, echoing economic reform, China's mass media have been implementing reform that "has had the unintended effect of liberalizing China's media system" (Chu 1994). That is why some commentators recently believe *Four Theories of the Press* "has been subject to extensive review, criticism and effective refutation" (McQuail 2000, p.153).

In addition, since Siebert et al. (1963) made clear that "the Soviet Communist theory is only a development of the much older Authoritarian theory, and . . . the Social Responsibility theory is only a modification of the Libertarian theory" (p.31), scholars of journalism suggest having "a category for 'development theory' alongside the liberal and Marxist variants" (McQuail 2000, p.155) and "revisiting *Four Theories* by adding a fifth or sixth" (Nerone et al. 1995, pp.29-30).

Lowenstein contended that the "four theories" concept lacks the flexibility needed for proper description of all of today's press systems and therefore should be modified. He put forward his new "two-tiered" typology, claiming it "could be applied to both the *ownership* and *philosophy* of a given press system" (Merrill and Lowenstein 1971, p.186). He classified press ownership as three types: "Private, Multi-party and Government" (p.186); and press philosophies as four: "Authoritarian, Social-Centralist, Libertarian and Social Libertarian" (p.186). Under his two-tiered system, "England's print media may be classified in the following manner: Ownership: Private; Philosophy: Social-libertarian" (p.188).

Lowenstein also abandoned "Soviet-Communism" (Siebert et al. 1963, p.20) and replaced it with "social-centralist" (Merrill 1990, p.37) philosophy. This philosophical concept "would control the media not primarily to keep them from harming the ruling elite, but to channel the power of the media into what the state sees as constructive educational, developmental and political goals" (Merrill, 1990, p.37). Consequently, because the Party and the government still own China's mass media, the Chinese newspaper conglomerates may be classified with this concept. However, one contradiction emerges when the "two-tiered" typology is applied to the Chinese press system. In Lowenstein's opinion, ". . . to say that a

press system is privately owned is to indicate that its chief source of revenue must come from advertising and/or subscriptions" (Merrill & Lowenstein 1971, p.186). The ambiguity is that in 1999 three-fourths of Chinese newspapers, whether affiliated with conglomerates or not, depended mainly on advertising revenues (*1999 China Journalism Yearbook 2000*), but none of them were privately owned.

Not only does Picard (1985) think the four theories "do not take into account political and economic conditions that exist in much of the world, especially in developing countries" (p.61), but he also thinks Lowenstein's modifications were never widely accepted. This is because "the social centralist theory did not appear broad enough to cover all communist and developing world approaches to press policy" (Picard 1985, p.64). To modify the "four theories," Picard manages to deduce a fifth theory from the democratic socialist ideology that developed in Western Europe in the 1950s. Picard believes his democratic socialist theory offers a significantly different view of the press from that of the traditional theories of the press. He argues: "Under democratic socialist theory, the media are not instruments for private owners — as they are under the libertarian and social responsibility theories . . . nor are they instruments of the state or party — as they are under the Soviet/communist and authoritarian theories of the press" (Picard 1985, p.68). Under this theory, media are viewed as "instruments of the people, public utilities" (Picard 1985, p.66). When it comes to ownership of the press, Picard (1985) says: "Ultimately, ownership under such a system would be public and not-for-profit, through foundations, nonprofit corporations, journalist-operated cooperatives, and other collective organizations" (p.67). But, like the "four theories," Picard's fifth one still might not perfectly suit China's socialist press groups, which are operated in the capitalist way.

Indeed, only a blend of various theories can describe the current present press system of China. Chinese newspaper conglomerates in fact have a combination of characteristics described in *Four Theories of the Press*, Lowenstein's social-centralist concept and Picard's fifth theory. Because they are owned by the Party and the government, these conglomerates are not allowed to criticize the whole ruling class, but they also argue that they are instruments of the people and serve the people. Thus, one of the major purposes of this article is to categorize the system under which 26 Chinese newspaper conglomerates have been formed.

#### ***The Motives for Forming China's Newspaper Conglomerates***

As China's economic reform, which started since 1979, goes deeper, the amended Chinese

Constitution has already accepted the private and collective economic-ownership modes in addition to the strongest one, the state-owned or the public-owned mode (*People's Daily*, April 13, 1988). The predominant economic base is still under state control, although capitalist economic mechanisms and capitalist business management practices are in vogue.

"As the winds of the reform sweep the cities, there are those who suggest that journalistic institutions become independent producers, like industry and other enterprises" (Won Ho Chang 1989, p.56). Almost 20 years had passed before this suggestion made in the early 1980s came true economically in January 1996 with the conglomeration of China's newspaper industry.

Chinese Party and government leaders' decisions to promote the establishment of socialist press groups were driven by both political and economic profits. As defined by the SPPA, the principal purpose was to "enable Party newspapers to readapt themselves to the requirements of the socialist market economy while playing a better role in guiding public opinion by consolidating a powerful economic base" (SPPA 1996, 23).

With further analysis, four detailed motives that pushed China to make the decision to build newspaper groups can be identified. The first is that China wants to strengthen its Party newspapers' propaganda function. The second motive is the Chinese government's hope that its newspapers can become financially independent by enabling profitable papers to cross-subsidize unprofitable but socially and culturally important newspapers. A typical example is the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee's decision to merge the *Xinmin Evening News* with the *Wenhui Bao* into the Wenhui-Xinmin United Press Group in July 1998 (Zhao, Y. 2000). The *Xinmin* is a profitable evening paper located in Shanghai, China's largest city, while the *Wenhui* is the city's oldest morning daily with a long history of providing highbrow features for intellectuals. It is not profitable.

A third motive is that China's top press planners are "consciously pursuing a policy of calculated and preferential liberalization" (Zhao, Y. 2000). This is because the SPPA was to provide strong papers with more liberal operational policies if they were not keen on merging unprofitable smaller papers (Liu, B. 1998). The fourth motive is a long-term strategy. Liu Hong (2000) describes it as seeking "to find a way for the Chinese press industry to keep up with global trends."

In conclusion, there are some researchers who doubt that conglomeration will only result in closer

Party control, citing the case that a “more powerful Party committee has been formed to place the two formerly independent newspapers under its leadership after the Wenhui-Xinmin United Group was launched in Shanghai” (Li and Liu 2001).

There are still some scholars who believe both market consolidation and press conglomeration “are aimed at enhancing political control, on the one hand, and facilitating press capitalization, on the other” (Zhao, Y. 2000). As a result, “The introduction of market logic into Party journalism may lead to the emergence of a propaganda/commercial model of journalism” (Zhao, Y. 1996).

#### *The Nature and Characteristics of Chinese and U.S. Newspaper Groups*

When involved with politics and the economy, the word “conglomerate” has quite a few connotations. When it comes to mass media, newspaper conglomerates can also be called press groups or corporate newspapers, i.e., “an organization that owns two or more newspapers in different cities and is usually managed by professionals rather than the owners” (Demers 1999).

On the other hand, there are usually at least three types of media conglomerates — the single-medium business conglomerate, either print-based or broadcast-based; the cross-media conglomerate containing print, broadcast and other media-related businesses; and the multimedia or cross-sector conglomerate dominating the entire media from print publications to audio-video businesses (Zhao, Y. 2000; McChesney 1999, p.19-20; *Guangzhou Daily*, 16 January 1996). Currently, all of the Chinese newspaper conglomerates have opted for the first model because national regulations confine Chinese newspaper groups to the print sector. Therefore, taking the form of vertical integration, a typical Chinese socialist press group is composed of a flagship Party daily, a book-publishing house, some affiliated publications and some subsidiary companies. More important, although the press groups are run in the same way as their modern capitalist counterparts, they are owned by the Party or the government because economic reform has not changed China’s economic-ownership system. As in many sectors, “ In the media sector, the Party is concurrently the owner, the manager, and the practitioner” (Chu 1994).

There is a need, therefore, to summarize of the nature of Chinese newspaper conglomerates. Owning all mass media, the CPC has a long history of using newspapers as “weapons of mirroring politics, military affairs and economy and guiding them in turn” (Mao 1944). On April 2, 1942, Mao Zedong, chairman of the CPC, said, “The role and power of the newspapers consists in their ability to bring the Party program,

the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way" (Mao 1961, 4:241).

The Chinese leaders in the post-Mao era continue to insist on Chinese newspapers' role as a propaganda weapon or Party organ. In 1980, shortly before becoming the real power of China and the CPC, Deng Xiaoping made a speech to emphasize the role played by news media. He hoped newspapers and magazines would "publicize the superiority of socialism, the correctness of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the strength of Party leadership and the unity between Party and people, the tremendous achievements and bright future of socialist China" (Deng 1984, 240). After being appointed the CPC's general secretary in June 1989, Jiang Zemin also attached great importance to the news media's role as a Party organ. On Nov. 28, 1989, at a symposium on journalistic work, Jiang said, "Our country's newspapers, radio and TV stations are the mouthpieces of the Party, the government and the people" (Lin, F. 2001).

Therefore, so long as the ownership of Chinese conglomerates still belongs to the Party and the government, they cannot be allowed to criticize the ruling class, though they have the freedom of laying bare and criticizing corrupted Party and government officials. Meanwhile, they also advocate that they are the instruments of the people and serve the people. In addition, they are operated economically in the free-market mechanism. Defining capitalism, Saunders (1995) points out that capitalism is a "system in which individuals or combination of individuals compete with each other to accumulate wealth" (p.9). This competitive pursuit of profit also "means that capitalist enterprises are forever looking to discover new markets" (p.10). Chinese press groups have to emulate two of the three important factors of capitalism — production for profit and operation in a market-driven way. However, they do not completely emulate a third — private ownership of property.

Fundamentally contrary to the Chinese social system, the United States is one of "the advanced capitalist nations of North America" (Saunders 1995, vii). According to the thesis of *Four Theories of the Press*, the U.S. press should have the general characteristics of capitalism: profits, market and competition. Acquisition of smaller newspapers by large newspaper owners to snowball into even larger newspapers to win profits and competition has been a major goal of the U.S. media organizations. "The newspaper industry underwent a spectacular consolidation from the 1960s to the 1980s, leaving a half-dozen major chains ruling the roost" (McChesney 1999, 16). Now, "all daily newspapers of significance are owned by

conglomerates" (Fink 1996, 17).

However, concentrating only on specific media sectors will not easily lead to the establishment of powerful media empires. Since the 1970s and 1980s in the United States, the dominant trend, which has been accelerated in the 1990s, is the conglomeration of media ownership. "This is the process whereby media firms began to have major holdings in two or more distinct sectors of the media, such as book publishing, recorded music, and broadcasting" (McChesney 1999, 19). In addition, each of the six major Hollywood studios has actively become involved in merging or buying other media, thus forming truly vast multimedia conglomerates.

McChesney (1999) classifies these media conglomerates under two tiers. The first tier includes Time Warner, Disney, Murdoch's News Corp, etc., while the second tier comprises the great newspaper-based conglomerates such as Gannett, Knight-Ridder, The New York Times Co. and some broadcast-based powerhouses (pp.19-20). Kurtz (1998) breaks down Time Warner before it merged with AOL to show how huge the conglomerate is. It consisted of *Time* and *Life* magazines, Warner Books, Little Brown and Book-of-the-Month Club as publishers; HBO, CNN, and Prime Star as cable television stations; and Warner Brothers Studios and Castle Rock of the movie industry.

All the huge conglomerates are privately owned. The purpose of becoming a multimedia conglomerate "was and is stimulated by the desire to increase market power by cross-promoting and cross-selling media properties . . . across numerous, different sectors of the media that are not linked . . . by vertical integration" (McChesney 1999, p.22). Therefore, "The 1990s has seen an unprecedented wave of mergers and acquisitions among global media giants" (Herman and McChesney 1997, p.52). In addition, as the second tier of those huge media conglomerates, the "major newspaper chains have almost all found it lucrative to extend their holdings to radio and television stations, and sometimes to magazine or book publishing" (McChesney 1999, p.25).

### **METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS**

Berger (2000) points out that qualitative methodologies "often deal with important social, political, and economic matters and use concepts and theories from psychoanalytic thought, Marxist thought, semiotic thought, and the like" (xvii). As both one of the consequences and the barometer of China's

political and economic reforms, changes in the Chinese press clearly indicate the nation's social changes.

On the other hand, the conglomeration of China's newspaper industry has gone through a historically gradual process of development and has been done in several stages. Zhao Yuezhi (2000) notes that China's press reform has evolved "from commercialization to conglomeration." Historical research, a branch of qualitative research and "an art, not a science" (Berger 2000, p.138), should be employed to trace the origin and development of the conglomeration. Therefore, qualitative methods are appropriate for this study.

Furthermore, this study will employ qualitative and historical research in the form of a case study of GDPG because "case-study research might be especially desirable as a way to investigate complex social phenomena" (McTavish and Loether 1999, p.163). China's newspaper conglomerates are the outcome of the press commercialization under the Chinese socialist system with many characteristics of capitalist operating and managing mechanisms. Chinese media conglomeration is not only a complex social phenomenon but also a significant topic for mass communication research. More important, as China's "oldest" newspaper conglomerate, GDPG has been groping for systematic patterns and experience with which to manage and improve a press group (SPPA 1996, p.23). A case study of GDPG should be meaningful and potentially predictive of other developments in China's media.

This study will also employ content analysis, a quantitative method, to determine how conglomeration has influenced the content of the *Guangzhou Daily*. The content analysis will integrate historical and comparative approaches to analyze the paper's content during a specific period. In addition, the researchers have used in-depth interviews to collect perspective for the historical analysis.

#### ***Balancing the Needs of Party, Readers and Market: A Case Study of GDPG***

According to the Jan. 11, 2000, Issue of the *Gazette*, of the top 10 newspaper-advertising generators in China, two were municipal Party organs — the *Guangzhou Daily* (No. 1) and the *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily* (No.4). In fact, since the early 1990s, many municipal Party organs have grabbed the lion's share of the press market of the cities in which they are located. The *Guangzhou Daily* can focus its dense penetration into the Guangzhou metropolitan area and the affluent Pearl River Delta Region by splitting half of its total circulation for each. The strategy has contributed to the *Daily's* huge subscription base and its status as China's leader in newspaper advertising.

**TABLE 1**  
**China's Top Six Newspaper Advertising Revenue Makers in 2000**

Newspapers	Rank
The <i>Guangzhou Daily</i>	1
The <i>Xinmin Evening News</i>	2
The <i>Beijing Youth Daily</i>	3
The <i>Shenzhen Special Zone Daily</i>	4
The <i>Beijing Evening News</i>	5
The <i>Yangcheng Evening News</i>	6

*Source: The Press and Publications Gazette.*

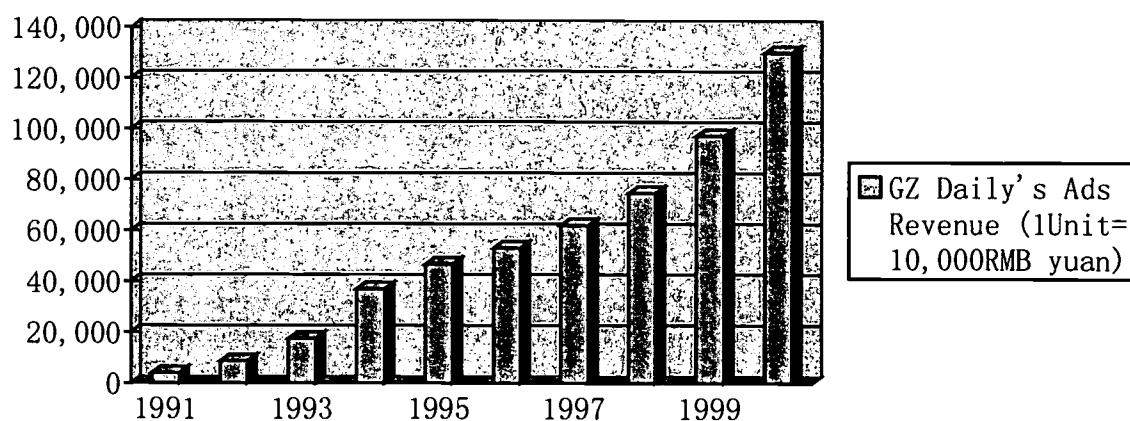
Table 1 indicates China's top six newspaper advertising revenue makers listed in the Jan. 18, 2001, issue of *China Press & Publications Gazette*. The advertising revenue of each listed in this issue exceeded \$60.24 million in 2000 with the *Guangzhou Daily* hitting 1.3 billion yuan (\$156.6 million) that year.

The *Daily*'s success is the result of diligent efforts and wise strategies for many years, especially for the past decade. Launched on Dec. 1, 1952, by the Guangzhou Party Committee, the *Guangzhou Daily* is headquartered in Guangzhou, the capital city of South China's Guangdong Province. The province's GDP of 1999 ranked first among all of China's provinces while the city and its southeastern Delta Region are China's most affluent area. The *Daily*'s circulation and advertising revenues increased to 630,000 and 530 million yuan (\$63.85 million) in 1996, No.1 among Chinese newspapers on the mainland. In addition, by 1996, before formal approval from Beijing, the *Daily* itself had long operated experimentally as a conglomerate. Therefore, in January 1996 China's central authorities decided to select the *Daily* as the first socialist press group. The *Daily*'s implementation of that decision may be summarized as follows.

1. *Early Marketization of Newspaper Management and Operations.* The *Guangzhou Daily* started to marketize its business side earlier than the SPPA required it to do so in 1992. In 1990, when almost all the other Chinese newspapers were still depending on China Post's delivery system, the *Daily* established its own delivery company. That helped increase the percentage of private subscriptions, an amazing (for China) 83.2 percent in 2000. The *Daily* also launched a chain of convenience stores to sell the newest issue of the *Daily*, subscriptions and classified ads. By July 2001, 153 stores were in operation in Guangzhou and the Delta Region. Thanks to its delivery network and chain store operations, the *Daily*'s circulation has increased greatly in the past decade. With only 340,000 copies in 1992, the circulation broke 1 million in 1998 and hit 1.63 million in July 2001.

2. *Increased Size of Paper for Satisfying Leaders and Market.* After expanding each edition's pages from four to eight in 1988, the *Daily* took the initiative to expand to 12 in 1992, 20 in 1996, 40 in October 1997 and 60 at the end of 2000. At present, the *Daily*, with 60 to 68 pages each day, is the largest newspaper in mainland China. This has guaranteed "more room for commercial advertising" and the satisfaction of "the contradictory demands of the market on the one hand and the CPC on the other" (Liu, H. 1998). The obvious advantage of expanding pages is that advertisers' demands can be met. Regarding the *Daily* as an influential advertising vehicle, more and more advertisers are eager to see their ads in the *Daily*. Consequently, the *Daily*'s present news-ads ratio is 3-to-7 or 4-to-6. The *Daily* has grown into an economically powerful Party paper whose annual ad revenue has ranked first nationally since 1995 (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**  
**The Guangzhou Daily's Ad Revenue from 1991 to 2000**



Source: The General Office of Guangzhou Daily Press Group.

Figure 1 shows the *Guangzhou Daily*'s advertising increase in the most recent 10-year period. The year 1991 saw the *Daily* pocket only 39.75 million yuan (\$4.78 million) from advertising sales, but its 1.3 billion yuan (\$156.6 million) advertising income in 2000 enabled the newspaper to retain its No. 1 position among Chinese newspapers.

3. *Sticking to Party Journalism while Following Journalistic Rules.* Lin Feng (2001) summarizes the major points of Party journalism as: The press should be "under the Party's leadership, the Party's ears and eyes, be run by Marxist politicians" and "correctly guide public opinion." Based on the combined

definitions of Li Yuanjiang(1993) and Zhao (1996), typical stories of Party journalism are coverage of Party lines and imperatives, government policies and regulations, National People's Congress' laws, various speeches, meetings and activities of Party and government leaders and lawmakers, and achievements of all sorts. However, most Chinese journalistic rules are similar to those of Western countries. Brooks et al. (1999) sum up the nature of news as "accuracy, fairness and objectivity" (p.13). The *Guangzhou Daily* never considers Party journalism contradictory to the nature or rules of journalism. It holds that it is a Party organ's duty to publicize the Party and government policies because they are closely related to people's lives. The country is, after all, under the socialist system. The *Daily* also believes it is important to improve the art of editing, reporting and publicizing. Four principles guide this effort.

The first is *news space*. As discussed previously, the *Daily* has 60 to 68 pages each day. Among them, every day, there are at least 20 to 28 pages for news. The second principle is to include *mainstream news*. An attempt is made to publish news that creates interest among readers and impacts society, such as significant events dealing with politics, domestic policy, international affairs, economic construction and accidents. The third principle is that of *editing Party journalism with journalistic rules*. The *Daily* encourages its reporters and editors to rewrite and re-edit the tedious but informative stories of Party journalism issued by government agencies. The *Daily*'s concrete practice is to rewrite them, give a good headline to them, subdivide them into more paragraphs, choose at least one photo to match them, and enhance them with graphics and bio boxes. In a word, the *Daily* tries to create "points of entry" to "lure scanners" (Harrigan 1993, p.9) first, then "to convert those scanners to readers" (Moen 2000, p.34). The fourth principle is the use of what the *Daily* calls *wise tactics*. Reports of disasters are always thorny missions for Chinese newspapers because some Party-Government officials do not like them and don't want them published. In such cases, the *Daily* appeals to wise tactics. To report a fireworks plant explosion in the Delta Region, which caused 195 deaths, the *Daily* highlighted its report on the front page of its July 1, 2000, issue by including an info box highlighting Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin's instructions about the importance of preventing accidents. Readjusted Party journalism such as this shows how the *Daily* has often dealt effectively with the bureaucracy of Party and government officials (see Figure 2).

The above-mentioned approaches deduced from the case study of GDPG are based on a procedure the *Daily* and GPG have adopted in the past 10 years: adhering to Party journalism by following good

journalistic rules while making use of wise tactics. This pattern constitutes "innovative treatment" (Zhao, Y. 1996) of news in the Chinese press. Since the conglomeration, stories employing innovative journalism are increasing in mass-appeal newspapers and are having the effect of liberalizing all Chinese media, even the Party organs. The content analysis of the next section is expected to support this conclusion as evidenced by the *Guangzhou Daily*.



Figure 2: The Front Page of the *Guangzhou Daily*, July 1, 2000.

#### *Tracing the Influence of Conglomeration: A Content Analysis of the Guangzhou Daily*

This study uses content analysis as a second major research method to trace the change in ratios of traditional Party journalism and journalism with innovative treatment on the front page of the *Guangzhou Daily* during a designated period. The intent is to examine the impact on content as a result of conglomeration.

The Chinese press has a long history of being used, as Siebert et al. commented on the Soviet Communist theory, to suit the needs of state power and Party influence (Siebert et al. 1961, p.121). That is why since the CPC came to power and founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, a typical Chinese press system composed of Party organs at the national, provincial and municipal levels and non-Party newspapers has been gradually established and continually strengthened.

Before the adoption of China's open-door policy at the beginning of the 1980s, especially before conglomeration, all the Party organs rigidly followed the traditional Party journalism principles of positive propaganda, "correct" opinion guidance and satisfaction of the leaders and the led at the same time. Economic reform and conglomeration have had a significant impact on the content of Chinese newspapers, especially on the mass-appeal evening, economic and youth papers. Zhao Yuezhi's case study of the *Beijing Youth News* finds out that after 1996, "The typical stories of Party journalism . . . no longer dominate the front page" (Zhao, Y. 1996). Although these stories still take up some space on the front page, very often they are handled with innovative treatment, freeing newspaper publishers or editors-in-chief to fill front pages with stories of social news, business news, local news and news about accidents. The major purpose of the content analysis was to find whether on the front pages of Party papers, Party journalism has been balanced with business stories, local stories and stories dealing with all walks of life.

#### *The Period Under Study*

In recent years two important annual meetings are held regularly in Beijing in the first half of March — the plenary sessions of the National People's Congress and the National People's Political Consultative Conference. As the highest organ of state power of China, the former has the power of amending the Constitution and making laws, electing the nation's president and vice president, deciding on governmental leaders, and examining and approving the plan for national economic and social development (*Encyclopedia of New China* 1987, pp.127-129). The latter is an organization of the patriotic united front of the Chinese people. For the purpose of developing a people's democracy and uniting people from all walks of life under the CPC's leadership, its major task is to hold discussions and consultations in various forms with leaders of various parties and organizations (pp.149-150). Conventionally, all the Party dailies have allocated dominant space on the front page to stories about these two meetings. This content analysis takes the first two weeks' *Guangzhou Daily* of March 2000 and the same newspaper in the same period in 1994

as representative samples A and B to show the impact of conglomeration. All the stories on the *Daily's* front page during this period are analyzed.

To adequately contrast the two-week period with other periods of the year, a constructed week was established to function as a "control." By using both historical and comparative approaches, the constructed week provided the researchers with needed context. Avoiding March 2000, the researcher chose the first seven months of that year and seven days, starting from Monday to Sunday, from each of the seven months. The result is average variants of seven days in a constructed week.

#### *Categories*

With the establishment of samples A and B and the constructed week, the study examined only the front page. The stories, photos and advertisements were all treated as units of analysis. The researchers also classified photos according to whether their content was about Party journalism or not. Consequently, seven categories were established:

1. PJS (stories of Party journalism)
2. AS (stories about accidents)
3. BS (stories about business news)
4. CS (stories about crime news)
5. LCS (stories about local communities)
6. NS/IS (stories of national and international news)
7. ADS (advertisements on the front page)

In addition, the researchers also categorized the content on the front page of the constructed week the same way. Based on comparisons of samples A and B and the constructed week, the researcher was able to determine whether these weeks in March were similar to or different from the overall pattern represented by data of the constructed week. It also showed the difference between Sample A and Sample B based on comparisons to the constructed week.

#### *Hypotheses*

Through an initial examination of the nature of and trends in China's newspaper conglomeration, the researchers formed the following hypotheses for this analysis:

- H1. The conglomeration of China's newspaper industry has allowed Chinese newspapers to

reorganize ratios among categories of stories on the front page.

- H2. Stories of Party journalism no longer always occupy the dominant space on the front page of some Party organs. Chinese newspapers are allocating greater space on the front page to such non-Party journalism news as news about business, education, crime, accidents and local communities.
- H3. Even on the front page of some Party organs, advertising is increasing because the Party and the government now inject little investment into the newspapers.

*Reliability*

To ensure the reliability of the coding system, three assistant librarians of GDPG, all of whom have bachelor's degrees, were trained in using the coding system to categorize and count the Party and non-Party journalism stories and photos on the *Daily's* front page during the designated period. They were taught to count one story as one unit. Each photo dealing with Party or non-Party journalism was also regarded as one unit, which was counted into the units of stories. One researcher and the three assistant librarians worked from July 18-20, 2001, independently analyzing the identical content. Comparison of the results shows the total reliability level as high as 95 to 96 percent.

The above-mentioned percentage is calculated by using Ole R. Holsti's formula cited by Wimmer and Dominick (1991, p.173) as follows:

2M

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

For instance, in calculating Sample A's total stories of Party journalism, including photos, the researcher and other three coders judged 125 units and agreed on 119 of them, the calculation is:

4(119)

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{4(119)}{125 + 125 + 125 + 125}$$

The result is .952 or 95.2 percent.

## **OTHER FINDINGS**

### ***The Party Journalism-Market Model***

The case study of GDPG found two major principles to which the newspaper conglomerate has adhered in the past decade. One is the group's "marketization" of its business side, and the other is the *Guangzhou Daily*'s adherence to Party journalism while following commonly accepted journalistic rules. The successful application of the two principles has led to the emergence of GDPG as a press power among Chinese newspapers on the mainland. Consequently, the Party Journalism-Market model, which enables the Chinese press not only to survive political and economic pressures but also to thrive in the socialist free-market system, has proven to be successful for GDPG.

As mentioned previously, China has now 26 newspaper groups. Twenty-one of them are composed of a flagship Party organ at the provincial or municipal level, several affiliated publications and a couple of subsidiary businesses. As a Chinese newspaper conglomerate with a Party organ at its core, it has to function as the Party-State mouthpiece, but it also can pocket much advertising money and attract huge numbers of subscribers by satisfying the needs of readers and advertisers. This is a strategy that appears to be successful within the Chinese political system. This model has roots in Confucius' *Doctrine of the Mean*, Aristotle's golden mean and Deng Xiaoping's "cat theory."

### ***The Doctrine of the Mean and the Golden Mean***

Confucius (about 551-479 B.C.) is one of the most famous philosophers and educators in ancient China. Confucianism, one of the major systems of thought in China, developed from the teaching of Confucius and his disciples. Concerned with the principles of good conduct, practical wisdom and proper social relationships, the essence of Confucianism is comprised in the nine ancient China works handed down by Confucius and his followers. The nine works are divided into two series, *The Four Books* and *The Five Classics*. One of the former is *Zhong Yong, The Doctrine of the Mean*, whose major virtue is the deduction of a mean between two extremes, which is below excess and above insufficiency. Applied to the practices of getting along with people and coping with issues, the mean insists on an evenhanded position, an unbiased attitude, a happy medium and a moderating tactic (*The Dictionary of Modern Chinese* 1995, 1498).

In Chinese history, there are numerous cases of people using this doctrine successfully to turn danger

into safety, poverty into wealth and disadvantage into advantage. A typical example is the pragmatic practice of Zhou Enlai, the late Chinese premier, during the notorious 10-year Cultural Revolution. Since Mao Zedong ignited the revolution in 1966 in order to "seize back the power usurped by capitalist-roaders" represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (*On Questions of Party History* 1981, p.90), the country's political stability was in danger and the economy was on the edge of collapse. Zhou, as No. 3 leader of Mao's proletarian headquarters, devoted himself to leading the revolution and to protecting those so-called counter-revolutionaries in the "Liu-Deng bourgeois headquarters" as well. In fact, Zhou's efforts enabled China's state machine and economy to linger without collapse in that decade. As *Time* commented in 1967 on Zhou's application of moderating tactic in the Cultural Revolution, "Chou [spelled by the Wade-Giles system], with his relative sophistication and shrewd political infighting ability, stands presently at the head of the government's new thrust toward moderation (*Time*, March 3, 1967).

After *The Doctrine of the Mean* was developed in China in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the theory of the mean, also called "the golden mean, emerged at the earliest beginnings of Western philosophy in fourth-century B.C. Greece" (Christians et al 1998,p.11). More exactly rendered as "Equilibrium and Harmony" (p.11), the golden mean, in Aristotle's opinion, means moral virtue, which is "the appropriate location between two extremes . . . the one involving excess and the other deficiency" (p.11). Emphasizing moderation or temperance, Aristotle's philosophy regards "courage as a mean between cowardice and temerity . . . and modesty as a mean between shamelessness and bashfulness" (p.11). What is more meaningful is that scholars of mass communication have already observed that the golden mean has been applied to journalistic practices, especially "in cases where there are two competing obligations" (p.12). For example, "In journalism, the sensational is derided and the virtues of balance, fairness and equal time are recognized" (p.11).

#### **Deng Xiaoping's "Cat Theory"**

Before the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping held the posts of the general secretary of the CPC Central Committee's Secretariat, standing committee member of the Politburo and vice premier of the State Council. He had a saying that was both internationally and domestically famous: "No matter whether it is a white or black cat, as long as it catches mice, it is a good cat." Although it is popularly called Deng's "cat theory," it represents the essence of Deng's Thought — emancipating the mind and seeking the truth

from the facts (Jiang, Z., 12 September 1997). Deng had repeatedly asked Party-State officials not to voice empty talk about “-ism” but to concentrate efforts on accomplishing their work. In Deng’s mind, anybody who has made any contribution to the Party, the country and the people is good. There is no need to care much about what “-ism” he or she sticks to.

Deng Xiaoping returned to power after the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC in December 1978 (Harris 2001, p.96). Since that time, Deng, as “the general designer of China’s policies of socialist reform and opening to the outside world and modernization” (Jiang, Z., 12 October 1992), had developed and practiced his theory of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics. The theory, which has some associations with the “cat theory,” has been further practiced and perfected by Jiang Zemin, Deng’s successor. The major points of the theory are: The socialism with Chinese characteristics is in the initial stage of socialism. . . . In deciding the orientation of the socialist development, we should emphasize blazing our own path without rigidly sticking to book worship or blindly copying the models of foreign countries. . . . The goal of our economic reform is to establish and perfect our socialist market-economy system by insisting on the public ownership mode and the public distribution principle, both of which are complemented by other modes of ownership and ways of distribution (Jiang, Z., October 12, 1992).

In fact, Deng’s theory may be considered a mean between the two extremes. One is Lenin’s Soviet socialism, and the other is capitalism. Based on the state or public ownership mode, China’s socialism is different from capitalism, whose fundamental ownership mode is private, but it also adopts the free-market system and encourages competition, which were not allowed by Lenin’s socialism. Such a mean, just as Deng once emphasized, is “a new cause. Marx did not mention it. Our predecessors have never practiced it. Other socialist countries have not tried it, either. Since we don’t have any existing experience to copy, we have to learn from practice” (Jiang, Z., September 12, 1997).

#### ***The Party Journalism-Market Model: A Golden Mean for Chinese Press Groups***

Under a system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Chinese press conglomerations also have sought a golden mean, i.e., the Party Journalism-Market model. The rationality of this model, as discussed above, is based on Confucius’ *Doctrine of the Mean*, Aristotle’s golden mean and Deng’s theory of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics. This model ensures that the Chinese press can

survive politically under the socialist system and at the same time thrive economically in the market. There is a necessity for the Chinese newspaper conglomerates to adopt the Party Journalism-Market model, and many newspapers have already benefited greatly from it. Two approaches are possible:

1. *The central and provincial Party organs' approach.* Competing with the mass-appeal newspapers, Party organs have often failed to gain the upper hand because their circulation is shrinking and enterprises' advertising capital no longer "flows indiscriminately to the party press" (Guo 2001). Party papers at the central and provincial levels suffered most from circulation and advertising losses. For a time, they turned out to be losers in the press market mainly because they have traditionally played a more important role in the Party-government propaganda. Heavily state-subsidized, they have to reach Party functionaries at the village level while they have never reached the urban consumer through private sales. Consequently, in 1996, even with generous support from the CPC committees at different levels, the central Party organ *People's Daily* barely reached a circulation of 2 million. The figure is still less than half of the 5 million achieved at its peak (Liu, H., 2000).

In face of these critical issues that require a quick decision on how to survive, Party organs at the central and provincial levels automatically started to employ the Party Journalism-Market model in attempt to adapt to the marketization of China's press. Starting in the middle of the 1990s, the central and provincial Party papers managed to launch their own evening papers, weekend editions and metro newspapers with the purpose of generating income to survive financially. Even the *People's Daily* started to "expand in the lucrative world of tabloid publishing by putting out racy Sunday magazines and weeklies" (Schell 1995). Besides its profitable weeklies, twice-weeklies or thrice-weeklies such as the *China Autos Gazette*, the *Securities Times* and the *Market Gazette*, in 1995 and 1997, it respectively launched the *People's Daily East China News* and the *People's Daily South China News*, two dailies published separately from the Beijing-headquartered *People's Daily*. Targeting the two cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou, surrounded by the two affluent delta regions of the Yangtze and Pearl rivers, these two metro papers are contributing considerable advertising revenue to their Beijing headquarters.

The Nanfang Daily Press Group (NDPG) is a Guangzhou-based newspaper conglomerate founded by its provincial Party flagship — the *Nanfang Daily*. The provincial Party organ typifies an example showing how provincial Party organs have made use of the Party Journalism-Market mode by marketizing their

affiliated publications or by running their own commercialized tabloids. As a daily newspaper located in the affluent Guangdong Province, until 1999, the *Nanfang Daily* had been pocketing more advertising money and subscriptions than other provincial Party organs.

To seize back lost market share, the *Nanfang Daily* and other 20 provincial Party organs, with the central authorities' approval, launched metro tabloids, which have become a "very competitive and vigorous new press category" (Jiang, Q. 2001) based on their amazing market performance. By the end of 2000, for example, only five years after its launch, the young *Nanfang Metro News*, whose parent paper is the *Nanfang Daily*, had achieved an average daily circulation of 600,000 copies — mainly through street sales and subscriptions — and an advertising income of 213 million yuan (\$25.66 million). Therefore, the metro news and NDPG's other profitable paper, the *Nanfang Weekend*, have in fact become two financial pillars of the provincial Party organ.

2. The *Municipal Party organs' approach*. Unlike Party organs at the central and provincial levels, the press groups formed by municipal Party papers usually implement the Party Journalism-Market model by expanding their Party organs' pages or editions to make more room for balancing the needs of the Party leaders, readers and advertisers. This is mainly because they are not obligated to become involved in the disadvantages faced by central and provincial Party organs. As a city's daily newspaper, a municipal Party paper has good reasons to target the wealthy urban and suburban residents with strong purchasing ability, whom advertisers also like to target. That is not the case for the provincial and central papers.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, such municipal Party organs as the *Guangzhou Daily*, the *Hangzhou Daily* and the *Harbin Daily* have been applying the Party Journalism-Market model to their development strategies. They have succeeded in grabbing the lion's share of the press market of the cities in which they are located.

The Hangzhou Daily Press Group (HZDPG) is located in scenic Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang Province. To win the competition with the city's economically powerful evening newspaper, HZDPG launched the afternoon edition of its flagship *Hangzhou Daily* in the early 1990s. In recent years, this strategy has effectively attracted a great number of subscribers and advertisers from the evening paper. The advertising revenue of the *Hangzhou Daily* has increased from 150 million yuan (\$18.07 million) in 1999 to 190 million yuan (\$22.89 million) in 2000, an increase of \$4.8 million (Zhan, X. August 1, 2001).

Among all the existing Chinese newspaper conglomerates, the Harbin Daily Press Group (HBDPG) has taken the lead in reorganizing all its affiliated businesses into holding companies. While the *Harbin Daily* holds the majority of the shares, the group operates both the newspaper and the affiliated businesses as a modern corporate system. The *Harbin Daily*, China's oldest municipal Party organ based in Harbin, capital of Northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province, in cooperation with the group's *New Evening News*, has dominated the Harbin press market. HBDPG's lucrative companies, which have tapped a wide range of projects from energy, electronics, communications to finance and hotels, have generated noticeable profits. In 1997, the total sales of all the affiliated businesses reached 132.8 million yuan (\$16 million) (Li and Liu 2001).

#### ***Impact on the Content of Chinese Newspapers***

Scholars and theorists have considered mass communication as both a societal and a cultural phenomenon. The assertion made by Siebert et al. is repeated as "the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" (Siebert et al. 1963, p.1). McQuail (2000) further notes that that commercialism in mass media implies "consequences for the type of media content which is mass-produced and 'marketed' as a commodity" (p.61). As the outcome of the Chinese press' conglomeration, which originated from the economic reform under the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, the ratio between Party and non-Party journalism in the content of Chinese newspapers has changed. Based on data obtained from the *Guangzhou Daily*, findings can be discussed in response to the three hypotheses.

#### ***Result 1: Conglomeration Has Changed the Ratios of Story Categories***

Table 2 is an overall comparison among sample A and B and the constructed week (CW). It indicates that the conglomeration of China's newspaper industry has caused the *Guangzhou Daily* to reorganize ratios among different categories of stories on the front page. Comparing Sample A with Sample B, one can clearly see several points. First, in 2000, the days for covering the two conferences are 14, one day fewer than that in 1994. The one-day deduction in the conference coverage resulted in the rearrangement of front-page content of the *Daily* on that day. Second, in 1994, the conference period produced 125 stories, including photos, of Party journalism while the contrasting period in 2000 produced only 69. In 1994, the *Daily* published a total of 281 stories and 25 pieces of advertising in the front page while in 2000 there were

188 stories and 30 advertisements. The decrease in the number of stories is caused by two things. One is that the latest period has one day fewer than the comparative period. The other is that the *Daily* has adopted an approach of using bigger photos and longer boxed stories on the front page in recent years, which naturally reduces the number of stories to some extent.

**TABLE 2**  
**Overall Comparisons among Samples A and B and Constructed Week**

Samples	Day (Avg.)	PJS	BS	NS/IS	LCS	AS	CS	ADS
Sample A March 9-23, 1994 (4)	Mon.	5.7	0	0.6	5	0.3	0.5	0.6
	Tues.	5.75	1.5	1.5	4.5	0.25	0	0.75
	Wed.	5	0	0.75	5.75	0.5	0.5	1.25
	Thurs.	6	0.3	1.33	4	0	0.6	1.6
	Fri.	5.7	0.3	0.6	4.3	0.3	0	1.3
	Sat.	4	0.3	1	5	0.67	0.3	1.3
	Sun.	4.7	0	0	5.6	0	0	0.67
<b>Total Stories, Ads</b>		125	9	20	113	7	7	25
Sample B March 4-17, 2000 (The number of each weekday is 2)	Mon.	7.5	2	1	2	1	0	1.5
	Tues.	6	1	1.5	2.5	0	1	2.5
	Wed.	3	3	1	4.5	0	0	2.5
	Thurs.	5.5	1.5	0.5	3.5	1	0	2.5
	Fri.	5	2.5	2.5	4.5	0	1	2.5
	Sat.	3.5	2	3	6	1	1	1.5
	Sun.	4	3	1.5	2.5	1	1	2
<b>Total Stories, Ads</b>		69	30	22	51	8	8	30
Constructed Week (Averages of 7 Days from Jan to Jul, 2000)	Mon.	0.83	2.66	0.83	3.33	0.5	0.83	2.83
	Tues.	1.66	2.5	0	4	0.5	1.33	2.5
	Wed.	2	3.5	0.5	2.66	0.33	1	2.16
	Thurs.	0.66	1.5	0.83	3.33	0.33	0.83	2.66
	Fri.	1.33	3	0.16	3.5	0.33	0.5	3.16
	Sat.	1.16	0.16	0.5	3	0.33	0.33	2.16
	Sun.	1	0.33	1.83	3.66	0.75	0.5	1.83
<b>Weekly Average</b>		8.64	13.65	4.65	23.48	3.07	4.99	17.3

Source: The Guangzhou Daily

Based on Table 2, Table 3 further shows the ratios between samples A and B in the number of stories of Party journalism and non-Party journalism. They indicate that in 2000 the ratio between the stories of Party journalism and those of non-Party journalism is 1-to-1.7 while in 1994 it was 1-to-1.2. The higher ratio shows that since conglomeration, although the *Guangzhou Daily* still attaches great importance to covering the two conferences held in Beijing, the quantity of reportage is on the decline. The quality of the reportage may be on the rise thanks to the Copy Desk's application of more effective editing tactics, but this point is not within the research scope of this thesis. Table 3 also shows the ads- stories ratios of samples A and B, which will be discussed in Result 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**Comparison of Ratios**

Samples	Total Stories	Total PJS	Total Non-PJS	Total Ads	PJS-Non-PJS Ratio	Ads-Stories Ratio
A	281	125	156	25	1-1.2	1-11
B	188	69	119	30	1-1.7	1-7

#### ***Result 2: The Conglomeration Has Increased Story Categories on the Front Page***

Based on Table 2, stories of Party journalism no longer always dominate the *Daily*'s front page. The newspaper has been allocating more space on the front page to non-Party journalism such as news about business, national and international affairs, accidents, crimes and local communities. Sample B reveals that even with the decrease in total stories in the two periods the stories of non- Party journalism have steadily grown. The growth of business news stories is the most conspicuous.

Table 4 shows the waning space of the Party-journalism stories and the swelling percentage of non -Party journalism. The result of the comparison between samples A and B also shows that that in 2000 the 119 stories of non -Party journalism account for 63.29 percent of the total stories while in 1994 the 156 stories of non - Party journalism made up 55.51 percent of the total, almost 8 percent lower than that contrasting period.

**TABLE 4**  
**Sample B's Increase and Decrease Compared with Sample A**

Samples	Total Stories	Total PJS	Total BS	Total NS/IS	Total LCS	Total AS	Total CS
A	281	125	9	20	113	7	7
B	188	69	30	22	51	8	8
Increase %			233.3	10		14.2	14.2
Decrease %	33.09	55.2			54.86		

Furthermore, it is obvious that the increasing percentage of business, accident and crime stories is great. As discussed in the case study of GDPG, to increase the coverage of accidents and crimes in the front page of a Party organ is not a simple matter. Table 6 shows that even during the conference period, Sample B revealed a 14.2 percent increase in stories of both accident and crime news. The result, therefore, shows the efforts of the *Guangzhou Daily* to exert journalistic rules or wise tactics to the practice of Party journalism. Another point worth noting is that the *Daily* by tradition covers various community activities. Sample B's 54.86 percent of decrease in local news was mainly caused by the editing principle of using bigger photos and longer stories. During the three days of data collection, the researcher and the *Daily* library's three assistant librarians found a trend of using bigger photos and longer stories for local news on the *Daily*'s front page. The trend is in accordance with the *Daily*'s editing policy since conglomeration.

#### ***Result 3: Advertising Has Been Increased on the Front Page***

Conglomeration has further heated Chinese newspapers' hot pursuit for advertising. They try to make full use of every possible inch for ads — even on the front page. On January 25, 1993, "For the first time in the history of the Chinese Communist press, the Shanghai-based *Wenhui Daily* devoted the front page . . . to an air conditioner advertisement" (Xu, Y. 1994).

The *Guangzhou Daily* has a long history of choosing suitable advertisements to place on its front page. The normal locations will usually be beside the newspaper's nameplate and at the bottom of the front page. With 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ " as its height and 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " as its width, the front page of the *Daily* normally can tolerate at most two 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ad strips at the bottom plus one half of 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " strip on the right ear of the paper. The researchers and the *Daily*'s three assistant librarians counted one half of 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ad strip as one unit of advertising when collecting data for the content analysis. Tables 4 and 5 also reveal that the total number of

advertisements in Sample B is 30, five units more than in Sample A. Thus, the Sample B ad to news ratio is 1-to-7, while Sample A is 1-to-11.

#### ***Comparison with the Constructed Week***

Table 5 is a comparison of daily average stories and ads during the two sample weeks to the constructed week. The comparison demonstrates that the average of Party journalism stories on the *Daily's* front page during the first seven months (without March) of 2000 is 1.23. The number is much lower than the equivalent averages of both samples A and B. That makes sense because the press is still under the socialist system with

**Table 5**  
**Comparison of Average Stories and Ads Per Day**

Samples/ Daily Averages	PJS	BS	NS/IS	LCS	AS	CS	ADS
A	5.26	0.34	0.83	4.88	0.29	0.27	1.06
B	4.93	2.14	1.57	3.64	0.5	0.5	2.14
CW	1.23	1.95	0.66	3.35	0.44	0.71	2.47

Chinese characteristics, which still regards the press, especially Party organs, as a Party-State tool. Every day, on average, a municipal Party organ runs on the front page one to two stories about the Party and the government. At the same time, it runs about two stories of business news and more than three of local community news. Meanwhile, very often readers can find stories of accident and crime news, which is usually breaking news, to satisfy their concern about national and community safety. The daily average of 2.47 advertisements in a newspaper's most conspicuous places meets the needs of advertisers. The daily averages of 1.23 Party journalism stories and 2.47 ads also represent the *Daily's* application of the Party Journalism-Market model, the golden mean.

Table 5 also shows the trend of declining Party journalism stories and increasing non-Party journalism stories on the front page. Sample B's daily average of four non-Party journalism stories exceeds Sample A except for the stories of local community news. The daily average of Party journalism stories has decreased from Sample A's 5.26 to Sample B's 4.93. In addition, Sample B's average of daily ads has increased by more than 100 percent from Sample A. The reason for Sample B's decrease in daily community news has already been explained in Result 2.

### ***The Universal Significance of the Content Analysis***

The content analysis of the *Guangzhou Daily*'s front page during the specific period of the two annual conferences, which is supported by a constructed week, has confirmed existence of a trend of a declining Party journalism stories and increasing non-Party journalism stories.

The *Daily* formed China's first newspaper conglomerate with a municipal Party organ as its flagship paper. The central authorities called on other newspapers to learn from GDPG's development strategy, operating mechanisms and editorial policies. As to the institutional structure, 21 of China's existing 26 newspaper conglomerates have followed GDCP's lead to center around provincial or municipal flagship Party organs. In addition, because all China's conglomerated and individual newspapers exist under the same social system, as "cultural, social and economic indicators" (McQuail 2000, p.305), the content of newspapers should basically reflect the same social and cultural values and beliefs. The impact on the *Daily*'s content made by conglomeration may also create similar effects on the content of other Chinese newspapers, at least on those of the Party organs functioning as flagship papers of newspaper conglomerates.

### ***Survive and Thrive in the Party Journalism-Market Model***

Based on the analysis above, the Party Journalism- Market model, which is like a cement wall of the Soviet Communist theory embedded with glazed tiles of the free market, originated from Deng Xiaoping's socialist theory with Chinese characteristics. The successful exertion of the model may ensure that Chinese newspaper groups will survive politically and thrive economically in the existing socialist system with Chinese characteristics. Since China exists in the initial stage of socialism with Chinese characteristics that is expected to last for at least 100 years, the Party Journalism-Market mode will be applied to the Chinese media system for a long time to come.

The Party Journalism-Market model represented by the conglomeration of the Chinese press is a modification of the Soviet Communist theory established by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. It combines the assertion that Chinese newspapers are the Party-State instruments and the conglomeration of the Chinese press, which is "designed . . . through adoption of a market economy" (Chu 1994). Based on the public-ownership system, the model, operated in the capitalist market mechanism, attempts to enable Chinese press groups to follow the two-satisfaction principle, which means to satisfy the Party and the

market as well. In practice, there are basically two approaches to implementing the model.

The first may be called the Central and Provincial Party Organ Approach, by which press groups normally highlight Party journalism in their flagship Party organs while employing the content of their affiliated tabloid metro papers or weeklies to satisfy the market represented by readers and advertisers. The second may be called the Municipal Party Organ Approach, which is often practiced by a press group with a municipal Party organ at its core to realize the two satisfactions. It will reach its purpose through the tactics of balancing stories of Party journalism and non-Party journalism on the one hand and through the policies of marketizing its affiliated businesses to maximize profits on the other. China's Party organ practitioners are suggested that they learn to use these two approaches if they want to survive under socialist system and to thrive on the common ground between Party journalism and commercialization.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *Goals achieved*

As discussed previously, China's central authorities hope conglomeration will be able to readapt Chinese newspapers for the requirements of the socialist market economy while playing a better role in guiding public opinion by consolidating a powerful economic base. Six years have passed since the beginning of 1996. Researchers and Party organ practitioners have noted that conglomeration has achieved its goals in respect to four sectors.

1. *Closer Party Control.* The newly formed Party committee of the Shanghai-based Wenhui-Xinmin United Group is a typical case. After the launch of the united group, a "more powerful Party committee has been formed to place the two formerly independent *Wenhui Daily* and *Xinmin Evening News* under its leadership" (Li and Liu 2001). Having lost the rights as person in law, the two newspapers have become two newsrooms. The group's Party committee is the supreme decision-maker, to which the group's president, editor-in-chief and general manager are responsible. It will decide the principles for correctly guiding public opinion, the long-term development strategy and the important editorial policies.

2. *Streamlined Internal Structure.* According to Liu Bo, the current director of the SPPA's Newspaper Management Bureau, one of the original purposes for conglomeration was to encourage powerful press groups to merge with those entertainment tabloids that had emerged since the early 1990s and lure readers

with sensational stories about sex and crimes (Liu, B. 1998). Conglomeration has enabled the central authorities' expectations to come true to some extent.

Take the Wenhui-Xinmin United Group for example. After conglomeration, the group started to reorganize the smaller papers it had merged and bought. On the basis of market research, it closed three affiliated papers, which had been in the red as a result of bad marketing. Instead, it launched three promising papers that are targeted at three suitable niche markets: The first is highly educated and middle-class readers who like reading lengthy investigative stories; the second is foreign officials and businesspeople who work in Shanghai; and the third is domestic business people who regard Wednesday as their most important business day.

The streamlining and reorganizing policies seem to be fruitful because the three newly launched papers have attracted the attention of advertisers who want to sell upper-class goods to the middle class and who want to do business with foreign and domestic businesspeople. For instance, the circulation of the seventh issue of the *Shanghai Wednesday* hit 300,000, and its advertising revenue reached 17 million yuan (\$2.05 million) in 2000, the same year it was launched.

3. *Strengthened Economic Power.* Statistics show that Chinese press groups have benefited economically from the conglomeration because, in 2000, each of the 14 press groups covered by the statistics earned a great deal of money. With total assets of 173 billion yuan (\$2.84 billion), the 14 press groups generated 6.31 billion yuan (\$727 million) of advertising revenue, which accounts for more than 44.67 percent of the whole press' 13.5 billion yuan (\$1.63 billion) of advertising revenue. Also in 2000, these 14 newspaper groups pocketed 1.82 billion yuan (\$219 million) in net income (Li and Liu 2001). By contrast, in 1991, advertising in all 1,750 Chinese newspapers only generated 960 million yuan (\$115.66 million) (Liang, H. 1992). With the much-strengthened financial power, Chinese press groups have invested heavily in beefing up their printing plants. Nine of the 14 groups have built advanced printing facilities. Although one such plant costs more than 100 million yuan (\$12.05 million), they have greatly improved these newspaper groups' ability to expand the number of pages and to print color.

4. *Improved Benefits.* In fact, the conglomeration of China's newspaper industry "has not only strengthened press groups' economic power but also brought many benefits to the reporters" (Liu, B., 6 August 2001).

One researcher's experience may prove that. GDPG's editorial staff now work in their centrally air-conditioned, spacious newsroom while the pressmen work in the newly designed, museum-like printing center. When one of the researchers started working with the *Daily* in October 1995, reporters' small offices had window air-conditioners, but there were no air-conditioners in the old printing plant. Moreover, the Wenhui-Xinmin United Group and the Shenzhen Special Zone Daily Group have already established multi-function office plazas, which, at more than 40-stories high, are the cities' landmark buildings.

Press groups have also increased their staff members' salaries. According to Zheng Ye of the Chengdu Commercial Daily Group, whose advertising revenue ranked ninth in 2000 (*Press and Publications Gazette*, January 11, 2001), her group pays a reporter more than 4,000 yuan (\$482) a month in addition to a sum of bonus earned yearly according to his or her performance. By comparison, in Zheng's city, capital of western China's Sichuan Province, a worker in a state-owned enterprise normally cannot earn more than 1,000 yuan (\$120) a month (Zheng, Y., 4 August 2001).

#### *Problems Facing China's Newspaper Conglomerates*

Although the Party Journalism-Market model has proven effective to enable Chinese newspaper groups to survive politically and thrive economically under China's market-economy system, these groups are facing a variety of problems. Some of them are so serious that if solutions to them are not worked out soon, they will hinder further development of the young press groups. First, most of China's press groups depend on two financial pillars: One is advertising revenue, and the other is affiliated businesses. The latter can be further broken down into two sorts: media-related and non-media-related business. However, not many Chinese press groups have succeeded in operating non-media businesses. One of the root reasons is that Chinese press groups have encountered barriers discouraging them from extending their expansions to other sectors at the same time sector-crossing is a prerequisite for the amplification of press groups' profitability.

Second, press groups have encountered problems running newspapers outside the geographic areas where they are located. GDPG and the *People's Daily* successfully extended only their affiliated *Soccer News* and *Global Times* to the whole country. Because they have exclusive niche markets, the two papers have not run into conflicts with local newspapers. If press groups want to see their flagship papers cross geographic borders, they will be strongly counterattacked by the local papers and local Party-government

officials. They may be driven out of the local market not by normal competition among newspapers but by ban of local authorities. This problem is rooted in China's current social system because the local Party-government officials regard local newspapers as ideological tools of their local area that they should protect.

Third, press groups are not allowed to cross media. As discussed earlier, most of the Chinese press groups own newspapers, magazines, subsidiary businesses and at least one book-publishing house. Therefore, it is easy for them to become book publishers and sellers. Until now, regulations and laws only allow press groups to enter the business of electronic publications, audio-video products and the Internet under the leadership of the SPPA. They are not allowed to conglomerate with broadcast media, which are administered by China's Ministry of Radio, Film and Television.

Thus, the barriers between different Chinese governmental bureaucracies have delayed further expansion of the Chinese press groups. As a result, they are still based on vertical integration and are not permitted to cross-promote and cross-sell media properties or brands (McChesney 1999, p.25). To complicate things further, the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television has already declared it will soon found some huge multimedia groups. Consequently, the problem of how to enable newspaper groups to expand into truly multimedia conglomerates has become a crucial issue.

Fourth, to raise funds for further development is difficult. All Chinese press groups have outlined ambitious long-term development strategies. Some are planning to build skyscraper office plazas, some are eager to build new printing plants, and some hope to install more powerful and faster press lines. All these plans depend on large sums of money. Since most of Chinese press groups are living on the profits from market with no government investment, seeking money from either domestic or overseas stock markets is an effective solution to this problem.

Nevertheless, the bottom line of Party-State authorities is that the Party organ, the core of each press group, cannot have anything to do with the stock market. In China's system, Party organs should always put the role of the Party-State and social responsibility above anything else (Li and Liu 2001). Only can the enterprises' affiliates be listed in the stock market. Time- and energy-consuming preparations should be conducted, i.e., buying a listed company and injecting new capital into it to ensure it becomes a good buy on the market.

***The Destination of China's Newspaper Aircraft Carriers***

Li Xiaohua and Liu Shuanyang (2001) vividly compare the Chinese press groups to newspaper aircraft carriers because each newspaper conglomerate, which comprises one flagship paper "escorted" by about five affiliated publications and five subsidiary businesses, looks like an aircraft carrier battle group.

Even under a socialist market-economy system, every policy regarding the country's political, economic, social and cultural reforms remain firmly in the hands of Party and government authorities. Further development of the press groups also depends on Party-State willingness to enact a series of favorable policies and reforms.

According to a source in the CPC Propaganda Department, who asked to remain anonymous, the department will soon issue an order to allow several politically and economically powerful press groups with Party organs at the core to establish cross-sector multimedia groups. The performance of those groups would not be confined to a geographic area (Huang, Z., August 5, 2001). The significance of this decision lies in the fact that it would permit significant development of the press groups, permit the groups to seek stock market listings for their affiliated companies and encourage the groups to maximize their business scope. The major purpose of the decision, according to the source, is to form powerful multimedia groups truly operated as modern corporations in response to the challenges posed by foreign media powers. Those competitors will enter China with the help of the WTO treaties.

Whether this imperative has been formally promulgated or not, it has outlined a solution to the most important problem facing the press groups. The ability to list affiliated businesses on the domestic and international stock markets and the ability to cross sectors and become multimedia groups will help immensely. Chinese press groups are expected to develop rapidly with these assists.

The conglomeration of China's newspaper industry has been ongoing for six years. Twenty-six newspaper conglomerates have been established. Thus, 26 newspaper aircraft carriers have been launched on the vast ocean of the Chinese market. Their destination is to become huge sect or-crossing multimedia conglomerates. Their trajectory is, under the Party Journalism-Market model, to jump onto the first terrace of political survival and economic expansion, and then to take the road of financing through the stock market. On the second terrace, the stock market, the newspaper groups need to spend a relatively longer period streamlining their internal structure, expanding their business scope and strengthening their

economic power. The time on the second terrace may be longer. Only when the press groups' preparations are mature can they begin their strategy of crossing sectors, penetrating the turf of other mass media and becoming multimedia groups.

The conglomeration of China's newspaper industry is the outcome of the reforms of China's political, economic and social systems. It also is the Chinese press system's reaction to changing external conditions. If the political, economic and social system can maintain the stable and healthy development environment of today, Chinese press groups have a bright future.

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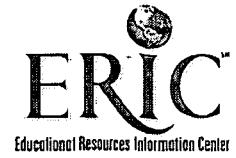
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